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Parents' Perceptions of Partners in Print, a Family Literacy Program

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by

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DEDICATION

To Jason, “We share doctorates…”

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ABSTRACT

Parents' Perceptions of Partners in Print, a Family Literacy Program

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Partners in Print, a family literacy program, was brought to the urban elementary school in this study to educate and empower kindergarten and first grade parents to promote literacy development at home. This research aimed to explore the impact of participation in this program after consistent participation by utilizing a one-group pre-test, post-test research design. The Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey, which included both structured and unstructured questions, was administered before and after participation in the program to elicit notions of parent empowerment and growth in the home literacy environment. Parent participants also completed a document review of program handouts to triangulate the data.

The data suggested that parents feel more empowered after consistently participating in Partners in Print. There was also evidence that the home literacy environment was of higher quality after participation. This study validated the practice of implementing family literacy programs as a strategy for empowering parents and enriching the home literacy environments of children.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The ability to read and write is crucial to fully participating in America's democratic society (National Institute for Literacy, 2008). The demand for literacy is evident in all aspects of American life, from sending an email to participating in a religious service, or from following directions on a medical prescription to understanding a road sign. Literacy is involved in almost every aspect of our day-to-day lives, in ways both trivial and profound. Those with poor literacy skills not only face the difficulties of navigating through the issues of daily life, but they also face larger, more serious issues such as lower income, unemployment, limited ability to meet the health needs of family members, trouble with crime or the law, socially harmful activities, and ignorance about society's civic affairs (National Institute for Literacy, 2008). It is socially irresponsible for society to fail to provide all citizens with the literacy skills needed to take advantage of the opportunities of America, especially when this failure disproportionately affects Latinos, establishing a persistent achievement gap. Mike Schmoker (2006), a leader in educational improvement, imparted that obtaining authentic literacy skills ensures access to college, an educational outcome elusively denied to marginalized groups in comparison to their white counterparts. Sanchez, Pompa and Cancino (2005) reported that nationwide only 63% of Latinos graduate from high school, compared to 93% of white students. In his powerful book challenging educators to close this achievement gap, Mike Schmoker (2006) explained:

> One of the saddest features of life in the United States, with its unmatched prosperity, is that 40 percent of those born into the bottom economic fifth stay there as adults (Kahlenberg, 2004). If we want to end this cycle of inequity and intergenerational poverty, education is the surest route. The gateway to a good education is literacy. (p. 57)

In fact, it is well documented that strong literacy skills directly correlate with future economic success (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; National Institute for Literacy, 2008; Schmoker, 2006). The U.S. Department of Education has reported that the likelihood of earning a bachelor's degree for a student of low socio-economic status increases with high achievement in school (Aud, Hussar, et al., 2010). For this reason, Schmoker (2006) asserted that promoting authentic literacy, the gateway, is the school's moral duty. He argued that the success of America's democracy depends on its citizens being able to intelligently participate through reading, writing, listening and speaking; the components of authentic literacy and of our democracy. Therefore it is education's moral duty to employ sound literacy development strategies in schools so that all our citizens are equipped with the tools to take advantage of opportunities for success.

Employing sound literacy development must begin at an early age. The National Early Literacy Panel's 2008 report suggested several reasons for fostering literacy learning at an early age (National Institute for Literacy, 2008). First of all, preschool aged children need to acquire linguistic and cognitive skills that they will build upon as their learning matures. Second, studies have shown that the habits and patterns of young children, such as kindergarteners, become permanent as they mature, making it crucial

that the developed patterns and habits are conducive to literacy development. Furthermore, statistics show that children in fourth grade who are poor readers will most likely never become strong readers, which demonstrates how crucial it is for educators to intervene before it is too late. Finally, for developmental reasons young children are more likely than older children to be surrounded by adults, who help navigate their world. An adult-rich environment naturally stimulates literacy development through daily interactions (National Institute for Literacy, 2008).

The evidence suggesting that children's emergent literacy skills predict future literacy success is well-documented, which is why family literacy programs, targeting early literacy development, continue to be commonly used (Cook-Cottone, 2004; Phillips, Hayden, & Norris, 2006; Saracho, 2008; St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). Educators and scholars agree that there is a connection between literacy outcomes of children and their family literacy environment. For this reason, educators continue to search for the most effective ways to implement family literacy programs (Cook-Cottone, 2004). The rationale for most family literacy programs is to establish a home-school connection in efforts to enrich the child's *home literacy environment* (Phillips et al., 2006). The home literacy environment is defined as "the experiences, attitudes, and materials pertaining to literacy that a child encounters and interacts with at home…" (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005, p. 346). A multitude of studies have shown that a child's home literacy environment directly affects his or her future performance of emergent literacy skills (Burgess, 2005; Phillips et al., 2006; van Steensel, 2006; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006).

In light of this information, this research was a study of the impact of an early literacy development program, Partners in Print. Written and developed by literacy consultants Julie Zrna, Anne Robinson, and Kim Falkenberg, this program involves parents and young children partnering together to engage in literacy development activities that aim to strengthen the child's emergent literacy skills, while empowering and educating the parent to be able to help at home. The research focused on parents' perceptions of the program, questioning whether the program educates, empowers, and enriches the parents and families, as its program goals promise (Partners in Print, 2004). A survey yielding both quantitative and qualitative data was administered so that a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Partners in Print program on parents and families would be realized. In addition, a document review by parents of the program handouts was analyzed and parents reported the impact of the program handouts to triangulate the data. The knowledge gained from this dissertation project provides important information to both the involved school and to researchers of early literacy, enabling more informed decisions regarding future implementation of family literacy programs.

Statement of the Problem

In order for all children to obtain strong early literacy skills, especially Latinos who continue to fall behind their white counterparts, educators constantly search for ways to enhance literacy development (Sanchez, Pompa & Cancino, 2005; St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). One strategy is to enrich the home literacy environment defined as the "the experiences, attitudes, and materials pertaining to literacy that a child encounters and

interacts with at home…" (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 346). Studies have shown that a child's home literacy environment directly affects future performance of emergent literacy skills (Burgess, 2005; van Steensel, 2006; Weigel et al., 2006). Children with more enriching home literacy environments, often those with more highly educated parents, have an educational advantage (Weigel et al., 2006). However, our public school systems are responsible for providing all children with a fair and equal education, not just those who may have the advantages of an enriched home literacy environment. For this reason, many schools implement family literacy programs to help all families, students, and schools join together in efforts to promote literacy development (Phillips et al., 2006). With the wide variety of family literacy programs available to educators and the diversity among schools and their populations, it is unclear which programs meet the needs of a particular school and its local characteristics. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to evaluate an implemented program to ensure that it is effective in reaching its promised goals.

Purpose of the Study

For the past four years, the researcher has coordinated the family literacy program, Partners in Print (2004) at Kingsley Elementary School (pseudonym) in the Los Angeles metropolis. According to the Common Core of Data (CCD) from the National Center of Educational Statistics, in 2009-2010, Kingsley received Title I funding due to its high percentage of children obtaining free and reduced lunch (75%). With the total enrollment of 509 students, Kingsley serves a diverse population. The demographic make-up consists of 5% Black or African American, 15% White, 10% Asian, and 70%

Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2010.) Examining the California Department of Education's 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 75% of Kingsley's white population performed at or above proficient level in English-Language Arts, but only 56% of the Hispanic population performed at or above proficiency. This unacceptable achievement gap provided the motivation for the researcher to coordinate the family literacy program, Partners in Print, at Kingsley Elementary School. Partners in Print began at Kingsley Elementary in 2008. At that time, a traditional English-only school curriculum existed at the school. Then, in 2009, Kingsley began a Dual-Immersion program in kindergarten where children received instruction in both Spanish (70% of the school day) and English (30% of the school day). In 2010, the Dual-Language program grew to accommodate first graders and kindergarteners. At that time, Partners in Print evolved to accommodate literacy development in both Spanish and English. Following Cross-Language Transfer theory (as cited in Atwill, Blanchard, Christie, Gorin, & Garcia, 2010), Partners in Print reinforces the notion that children learn a language through interactions with language role models. Despite the fact that children may be learning a new language in school, families at Partners in Print are encouraged to foster literacy development in the preferred home language. In this way, children are guaranteed to have good language role models regardless of whether they are at home or at school. Once children are strong in one language, many of the literacy concepts transfer, establishing habits of practice that strengthen literacy skills in the targeted language. Because Partners in Print provides all

materials in both Spanish and English, the program easily transitioned into providing instruction in Spanish (Atwill et al., 2010).

Designed for beginning readers, Partners in Print invites students and their families to attend literacy nights where they rotate through stations while learning or reviewing literacy activities so that by evening's end, families have gained new strategies to foster their child's literacy. The purpose of this study was twofold. First, the researcher aimed to explore the impact Partners in Print had towards meeting its goal of empowering and educating parents to promote the child's literacy development at home. Second, the researcher aimed to explore the impact on the family's home literacy environment after consistently attending Partners in Print family literacy nights compared to families that did not participate in the program.

Significance of the Study

The overarching program goal of the family literacy program, Partners in Print, is to educate and empower parents so that they feel equipped to facilitate literacy development with their children. For this reason, the study focused on the parents' perceptions of the program; asking parents if their experiences with the program were educational and empowering is a key reason why this study was unique compared to others in the field. Often, family literacy programs are evaluated based on their efficacy towards building literacy skills (Cook-Cottone, 2004; Phillips et al., 2006; Saracho, 2008). This dissertation project distinguished itself by valuing the parents' point of view.

There are three other key reasons this study is significant. First, on a larger scale, literacy coordinators, instructional leaders, and researchers need to explore how Partners

in Print contributes to the field's understanding of home literacy environments, their diverse characteristics, and their effect on literacy development. Second, with the myriad of initiatives and programs available to schools, Kingsley needs to ensure that its efforts and resources are allocated toward a program that is benefitting its particular school community. Each school has its own local population, needs, funds of knowledge, and resources (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 2005). With the plethora of family programs available, it would be wasteful to mismatch a school with an ill-fitting family literacy program. If it were found that Partners in Print succeeded at its stated goals of educating and empowering parents so that they can foster children's literacy development, then implementation of this program could continue and expand to more schools in the public sector. Finally, if it were found that the home literacy environments of the participants improved as a result of this program, then those children would be more likely to make gains in their literacy development, which could possibly work towards equalizing opportunity. This balance of opportunity may aide in curtailing the pervasiveness of the achievement gap that exists among our less-advantaged children and that exist at the researcher's school (Weigel et al., 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that grounds this study is an extension of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory developed by Barbara Rogoff (2003), an educator and researcher who has focused on the social and collaborative nature of learning. Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory articulates that learning is embedded in an individual's social and cultural events, and occurs through interactions with people,

objects, and events in the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In her seminal work, Rogoff (2003) expanded Vygotsky's ideas and argued that learning and development must be considered through a perspective called Development as Transformation of Participation. Rueda, Klingner, Sager, and Velasco (2008) clarified Rogoff's conceptualization of learning by explaining that there are three "planes of development" (p. 144) that interact and influence an individual's learning simultaneously. The first plane of development is the individual plane of development, which includes cognition, behavior, attitudes, motivation, beliefs, and values at the individual level. The second plane, the interpersonal plane of development, concerns communication, dialogue, roles, conflict, cooperation, and discourse. The third plane of development is the community-institutional plane. The shared history, language, rules, values, beliefs, identities, and activities that the individual participates in at this level influences the individual's learning and development (Rueda et al., 2008). According to Rogoff (2003), these multiple levels of development cannot be isolated; an individual's transformation from learning and developing is the result of these levels interacting or colliding with the new learning.

The Development as Transformation of Participation perspective guided this study because the potential gains made from employment of Partners in Print rely on an individual's interaction with the three planes of development articulated by Rueda et al. (2008). The family literacy program, Partners in Print, is a program involving parents bringing their kindergartners and first graders to the school in the evening for a parent-child rotation through learning stations. At each station, a teacher demonstrates a literacy

strategy, such as writing a list, and then encourages the parents to practice this skill during the session with their child. By evening's end, parents have gained new strategies to foster their child's literacy. When parents and caregivers, with their individual attributes, attitudes, cognitive skills, and beliefs (individual plane) attend family nights, they interact, cooperate, and communicate (interpersonal plane) with their children, teachers, and other parents. This all occurs within the school community complete with its rules, shared history, beliefs, and activities (community-institutional plane). The efforts of the Partners in Print program are informed by Rogoff's (2003) transformation of participation perspective because the program relies on the multiple planes of development intermingling for the sake of educating the families.

Research Questions

Two research questions examined the effects of consistent participation, as defined as participating in at least three of the four family nights. The research questions guiding this study of the family literacy program Partners in Print were:

1. What impact does consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, have toward empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development?
2. What is the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families have consistently participated in Partners in Print, a school-based family literacy program?

Research Design and Methodology

Because the researcher of this program is a teacher at Kingsley Elementary where the program takes place, and is also the grant writer, organizer, and coordinator of Partners in Print, participant action research was used. Gay et al. (2009) described action research as research conducted by teachers or other school personnel where the findings provide insight used to create positive change for the school. The knowledge gained from this action research project informed the program stakeholders of Partners in Print's efficacy toward program goals, and it provided input to improve the program for the future. This action research project employed a longitudinal survey research design. Surveys, containing both quantitative and qualitative questions, were distributed to participants. Gay et al. (2009) explained that the advantage for using both qualitative and quantitative questions assisted researchers in completely understanding the phenomenon being studied. This comprehensive approach demanded ample resources, time, and a strong grasp of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. When educational researchers successfully collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data, they gain a complete understanding of how a program, for example, succeeds or fails. The study was designed as a one-group pre-test, post-test research design, meaning that one group (participating parents) completed a pre-test, received a treatment (Partners in Print) and then completed a post-test.

In addition to survey research, a document analysis by parents was employed to triangulate the data. On the post-test surveys, parents were provided an opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of the program handouts they have received and reviewed

throughout the program. The perspective gained from the parents regarding these handouts established a third point of data. The three points of data gained from qualitative questions regarding participation, quantitative questions regarding participation, and a document analysis that was confirmed or disconfirmed by parents' reports, established triangulation.

Participants

All kindergarten and first grade families were invited to participate in Partners in Print family nights. Based on prior attendance records, roughly 50-70 parents at Kingsley Elementary were asked to participate in this study. Kingsley Elementary School received Title I funding due to its high percentage of children obtaining free and reduced lunch (75%). Due to Kingsley's diverse population of 5% Black or African American, 15% White, 10% Asian, and 70% Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2010), the participants in this study reflected this diversity.

Hypotheses

There were two hypotheses in this study. First, the researcher hypothesized that families who had consistently participated in Partners in Print would report feeling more empowered to help their children build literacy skills. Families needed to attend at least three of the four Partners in Print events to be categorized as having consistent attendance. The second hypothesis was that families who consistently participated in Partners in Print would report having a more enriched home literacy environment after participating in the program. For this study, the treatment variable was the consistent

attendance, or participation, in Partners in Print family nights. The dependent variable was the quality of the home literacy environment as reported on the surveys. To identify the quality of the home literacy environment and to gauge parent empowerment, the Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES) was distributed to all participating kindergarten and first grade families before and after the program's implementation. The survey, adapted from widely used measurements and models in the field, is designed to find frequency of literacy behaviors and activities occurring within the home and to indicate feelings of parent empowerment in the process of literacy development. Comparisons and conclusions were drawn between families before and after attending Partners in Print.

Limitations

The study had three limitations. The first limitation related to the amount of uncontrollable variables that were prevalent when investigating home environments. All families had unique attributes and personalities that threatened external validity. Therefore, it was difficult to know whether other unintended variables, uncontrollable by the researcher, were interfering with the data.

The second limitation of this study related to the study's participants, which may have been threats to external validity. This study surveyed parents from one school in Los Angeles. The data was only generalizable to kindergarten and first grade parents in this particular school community who chose to attend Partners in Print. In addition, the participants themselves were asked to self-report their perceptions. As Gay et al. (2009) stated, researchers can never be sure that responders are being truthful or are accurately

reflecting their viewpoints or attitudes. Plus, the study compared parents who had chosen to attend a family event at school, which already established a selection bias. It was difficult for the researcher to ascertain whether the treatment, Partners in Print, influenced a change in the dependent variable of the quality of the home literacy environment or if the parents attending parent-involvement programs just happened to provide a richer home literacy environment. Gay et al. (2009) explained that this differential selection of participants should be avoided. However, Partners in Print was designed to invite families to attend on a voluntary basis.

The final limitation related to this action research being conducted by the researcher who was also the kindergarten teacher of many of the students attending, grant writer of the program, and planning leader of the program. Although viewed as a strength of the study by the researcher because as Gay et al. (2009) state teachers "[can] be professional problem solvers who are committed to improving both their own practice and student outcomes- [providing] a powerful reason to practice action research" (p.486), some educators may believe this invalidates the researcher's efforts. There is, however, a chance that experimenter bias may interplay with the data. However, a thorough research design, complete with data that have been triangulated by using multiple data points and a sound literature review, can overcome this limitation.

Delimitations

Numerous scholars have explored literacy and its definitions, resulting in a diversity of literacies with cultural connotations, technological meanings, and so on (Janks, 2010; Ortiz & Ordonez-Jasis, 2005). However for the purpose of this study, the

more traditional, narrow definition of literacy defined by the National Institute for Literacy (2008) was used. The National Institute for Literacy defines literacy as the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Also, although the Partners in Print program involved a partnership between children and their caregivers, this study primarily focused on the parents' perspectives and viewpoints regarding their empowerment and education. Finally, this action research was designed to inform the researcher and Kingsley Elementary School if the implemented family literacy program was worthwhile. Therefore, interpretation of the findings was limited to the parents and participants of the Kingsley Elementary school community.

Definitions of Key Terms

Literacy- defined by the National Institute for Literacy (2008) as the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Empower—-to enable parents to feel capable and confident to facilitate literacy development with their children.

Parent(s) —the primary adult(s) raising and nurturing the child.

Home literacy environment—"the experiences, attitudes, and materials pertaining to literacy that a child encounters and interacts with at home…" (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 346).

Consistent Participation—attending Partners in Print at least three of the four evenings (75% attendance).

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation project began with a description of the problem, its relevance in the field, and a brief overview of the research design. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth exploration of the literature pertaining to family literacy programs including their rationale, models, and theoretical support for implementation. Chapter 3 thoroughly describes the research methodology, data collection, and data analysis. In Chapter 4, findings from the data provide insightful information to stakeholders. Finally, Chapter 5 offers conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future considerations into the topic of family literacy programs.

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

Introduction

In the atmosphere of high stakes testing and No Child Left Behind, educators are constantly searching for ways to get a head start (St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). There is overwhelming evidence that children's emergent literacy skills predict future literacy success, which is why family literacy programs, targeting early literacy development, continue to be commonly used (Lonigan et al., 1999; National Institute for Literacy, 2008; Scarborough, 2001; Wells, 2010). Educators and scholars agree that the literacy outcomes of children are impacted by their home literacy environment. The home literacy environment is defined as the social interactions, materials, and practices involving literacy that occur in the home (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006). The notion that student learning is affected by the home literacy environment is rooted in Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory, which maintains that children learn through social and cultural interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Barbara Rogoff (2003), a human development scholar, has extended Vygotsky's theory in her concept of development as Transformation of Participation. Rogoff's theory that people change and develop as a result of their participation within themselves, with others, and with their culture and community frames this study of family literacy programs. After establishing this framework, this literature review will explore the relationship between homes, schools, and community and its effect on early literacy development. Then, family literacy programs will be examined in detail, from their

history, purposes, and models, to their outcomes. The review concludes with the assertion that family literacy programs need to be based on Rogoff's sociocultural learning theory so that educators can empower families to actively and intentionally participate in their children's literacy learning.

Theoretical Framework: Development as Transformation of Participation.

The theoretical framework, Development as Transformation of Participation (DTP), grounding this study of literacy development is based on Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory. Vygotsky argued that learning and development are a result of the interaction between the learner and the *more knowledgeable other* (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). This more knowledgeable other, whether he/she is a family member, teacher, or friend possesses a greater understanding or a higher ability level and serves as a guide or facilitator to the learner. Social Development Theory argues that the learner is an active participant in the development, and builds knowledge based on the social contexts and interactions. This learning is reciprocal and dynamic; the roles of student and teacher may switch depending on the context of the situation and the information to be learned (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). When considering literacy development, the learner gains literacy skills when stimulated by more knowledgeable other, who is often the parent (Saracho & Spodek, 2006; Wasik & Hindman , 2010).

A scholar in learning and development, Barbara Rogoff (2003) found Vygotsky's theory influential in her study of how learning and development occurs. Rogoff (1995) proposed a sociocultural approach known as Development as Transformation of

Participation which explains learning and development as the simultaneous interaction of three planes or foci of analysis. These non-hierarchical planes of development, corresponding to personal, interpersonal, and community processes, influence and are influenced through participation within these domains. The personal plane of development relates to the individual's contributions, cognition, behavior and change (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995; Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, & Lacasa, 2002; Rueda, Klingner, Sager, & Velasco, 2008). The interpersonal plane of development refers to communication, cooperation, conflict, and coordination between individuals. The community plane of development refers to the culturally organized activities, values and beliefs, institutional practices, and historical events that have affected the community (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995; Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, & Lacasa, 2002; Rueda, Klingner, Sager, & Velasco, 2008). Rogoff and her colleagues argued that development cannot be viewed from one plane of development isolated from the other planes. Instead the entire sociocultural event, including the mutual contributions from all three planes, must be considered. Rogoff (2003) stated:

> Together, the interpersonal, personal, and cultural-institutional aspects of the event constitute the activity. No aspect exists or can be studied in isolation from the others. An observer's relative focus on one or the other aspect can be changed, but they do not exist apart from each other. Analysis of interpersonal arrangements could not occur without background understanding of community processes (such as the historical and cultural roles and changing practices of

schools and families). At the same time, analysis requires some attention to the personal processes (such as efforts to learn through observation and participation in ongoing activities). (p. 58)

Theorists that Influenced Development as Participation Theory

Rogoff's (2003) work is influenced by two major approaches in the field of human development.

Whiting and Whiting. Beatrice Whiting and John Whiting (1975) developed a "psycho-cultural model" emphasizing that understanding human development requires understanding the cultural and social situations in which people develop. The Whitings' model was an important advancement in human development because for one of the first times the acknowledgement of the child's learning environment was recognized as a key factor in development (Rogoff, 2003). This environment, the context within a child's life where he or she is interacting and participating, is paramount to Rogoff's theory that argues for development as a result of this participation in the life environment.

Bronfenbrenner. Urie Bronfenbrenner, a scholar in developmental psychology, presented an ecological perspective on the cultural aspects of human development when he emphasized that different, hierarchical systems or contextual settings influence development (Wachs & Evans, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's theory posits that these systems influence development with bi-directional interactions within and between the systems. Wachs and Evans (2010) described these systems as follows:

- Microsystem—includes the immediate settings children experience, such as their home and school environment.

- Mesosystem—focuses on how the child relates to his/her microsystem.
- Exosystem—includes the systems outside of the child's control, such as a parent's job, that still impact the child.
- Macrosystem—encompasses society's cultural, political, economic, and natural forces that influence the child (such as race or income).

The notion that interactions can be recursive and bi-directional influenced Rogoff's (2003) participation theory which argues that development is a result of mutual contribution from a learner's social, intellectual, and interpersonal environment.

Rogoff's Theory of Development

The theory framing this dissertation study is Barbara Rogoff's Development as Transformation of Participation theory. Rogoff (2003) regarded the aforementioned notion that the child's environment greatly affects human development as a paramount conception. The bi-directionality of Bronfenbrenner's model resonated with her. However, she found that both Whiting and Whiting's model and Bronfenbrenner's model implied a hierarchy of the influential factors of development. Rogoff (2003) posited that the influential systems interact simultaneously with no "direction of causality" (p. 44). Instead of explaining her theory with circles, diagrams, and arrows, Rogoff provides a picture of child in a classroom playing a board game with peers and a teacher. She argued that solely analyzing the child at the individual level ignores the factors of the interpersonal interactions that occur between the student, peers, and teacher, and the larger institutional factors that exist because the child is playing the game in a classroom setting. To truly understand the factors of influence, all systems need to be considered as

mutual contributors (Rogoff, 2003). Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, and Lacasa (2002) summarized "that thinking is a mutually constituted process of active individuals engaging with others and with the community/institutional tools of their predecessors in ways that build on and transform their own efforts as well as the practices of their communities" (p. 285).

Relating Theory to Practice

Vygotsky (1978) posited that the source of literacy knowledge stems from the social interactions between individuals (Saracho & Spodek, 2006; Wasik & Hindman , 2010). Moreover, Whiting and Whiting and Bronfenbrenner included the learner's environment as a contributor of learning (Rogoff, 2003). Rogoff postulated that the personal, interpersonal, and community processes mutually contribute to development, implying that building emergent literacy skills occurs when learners participate within these developmental planes. Although Rogoff (2003) did not explicitly refer to literacy development, her theory is a useful lens for framing family literacy programs because of the multiple dimensions of influence. Family literacy programs are effective when they are informed by this Development as Transformation of Participation theory because most family literacy programs are based on the idea that the home environment is influential in literacy learning. This home literacy environment includes all three planes of development:

- Individual—the individual contributions toward literacy learning, such as the ability to remember the alphabet (cognition).

- Interpersonal—the interactions with parents, siblings, elders, and neighbors, such as a parent and child reading a take-out menu.
- Community—the larger, cultural practices or institutional traditions, such as the dominant notion that families are active participants in American schooling.

Family literacy programs are a tool for ultimately building children's literacy skills through altering the home literacy environment in ways that foster literacy development. Family participation in their child's literacy learning, through family literacy programs, applies Rogoff's Development as Transformation of Participation theory on a practical level (Rogoff, 2003). The practice of school, family and community partnerships, often referred to as parent involvement, offers students a comprehensive effort to stimulate and promote learning and will be discussed in detail in the next section.

School, Family, and Community Partnerships

It is well-documented that when parents actively participate in their children's education, positive results occur. Henderson and Mapp (2002) provided an extensive report on the impact of the school and family connection in their publication, which thoroughly examined one of the nine characteristics of high-performing schools: parent and community involvement. In their meta-analysis, Henderson and Mapp found "the evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life" (p.7). Henderson and Mapp reported that students with involved parents tend to earn better grades, pass their classes, attend school on a regular basis, reflect positive social skills, and graduate from high school.

Joyce Epstein, a known scholar of family and community involvement, explained that the notion of parent involvement was not always clear (2001). Three perspectives of parent involvement existed. The first perspective viewed parenting and schooling as separate, that schools and parents had separate goals and responsibilities. The second perspective, a shared responsibility where parents and teachers work together towards common goals, is the viewpoint that Esptein and scholars have proposed (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This perspective mirrors Rogoff's (2003) Development as Transformation of Participation theory: Learning goals are met through the interaction of individuals and their groups, culture, and organizations (such as school). The third perspective, a sequential responsibility, argues for parental responsibility first, and then the school takes over when the children are school-aged.

Situated in the second perspective, a partnership, Epstein (2001) argued that educators are no longer questioning whether or not parent involvement is helpful or whose responsibility it is, but instead are focused on characterizing parent involvement and determining how schools can obtain higher levels of parent participation. Epstein's illustrative description of the six types of parent involvement is enlightening:

- Type 1—Parenting. Helping families with parenting skills, child-raising skills, knowledge of child and adolescent development, family support, and establishing a home environment conducive to supporting learning.
- Type 2—Communicating. Communicating with families about the school events and student progress.

- Type 3—Volunteering. Involving families as volunteers and participants in school activities that enhance student learning and school programs.
- Type 4—Learning at Home. Involving families with actual student learning through activities such as interactive homework and other curriculum-linked activities.
- Type 5—Decision Making. Including families in the decision making at the school through councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
- Type 6—Collaborating with the Community. Working with community members and organizations in strengthening family practices, school programs, and student learning.

Epstein's (2001) view of parent involvement is clear. She posited that the main goal of school, family, and community partnerships is to "develop and conduct better communications with families across the grades to assist students to succeed in school" (p. 42).

Considering Epstein's (2001) description, family literacy programs aim to involve parents in Type 1, Parenting and Type 4, Learning at Home. Family literacy programs attempt to alter the home literacy environment (Type 1, Parenting) and they endeavor to involve families in actual student learning (Type 4, Learning at Home). Henderson and Mapp (2002) examined whether or not programs that attempt to enhance parent skills are helpful. Analyzing a study in West Virginia where parents attended training workshops, Henderson and Mapp reported that students with more highly involved parents tended to gain higher scores than children of less involved parents. Nistler and Maiers (2000)

summarized this notion of school family partnerships in their article arguing for the empowerment of parents in their children's literacy development. They stated that parents and schools should share the responsibility of educating their children; empowering parents in this manner establishes a valued partnership that works towards enhancing children's education and lives.

Parent Empowerment

The research theorizes that when schools and families work together, students find more success. However, in order for parents to contribute to a partnership, they must feel a sense of empowerment. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) addressed the concept of empowerment and designed a model for the process of empowerment. Before articulating their model, Cattaneo and Chapman explained that empowerment has been a key concept to many disciplines including community psychology, critical psychology, liberation psychology, multicultural counseling, feminist counseling, and social work. Cattaneo and Chapman found through extensive research that many definitions of empowerment seem to focus on the idea that empowerment improves human lives. For some scholars, empowerment links to "righting power imbalances in society" (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 646). For other scholars, empowerment relates to self-confidence and self-determination. Due to the vast array of ways to conceptualize empowerment, Cattaneo and Chapman created a process of empowerment model that can be used across a wide variety of disciplines including education. Thus, Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) defined empowerment as the following:

> An iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal. Social context influences all six process components and links among them. (p. 647)

Components of Empowerment

Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) articulated six components that iteratively interact in the process of empowerment.

- Personally Meaningful, Power-Oriented Goals—individual, personal aims that align with the obtainment of some sense of power or influence over social relations.
- Self-Efficacy—an individual's beliefs regarding his or her actual abilities.
- Knowledge—an understanding of the paths to goal attainment, including awareness of the resources required for goal attainment and how to obtain these resources.
- Competence—an individual's level of actual skill relevant to the goal.
- Action—the actual steps taken toward empowerment.
- Impact—the assessment of the individual's actions.

Social Context

Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) are clear that social context influences all of the aforementioned components. Cultural values, for example, influence the goals that individuals set. The social influence of actual or perceived discrimination can inhibit an

individual's belief in oneself (self-efficacy). Understanding how to navigate power structures in the social world influences an individual's level of knowledge, which will directly affect an individual's level of competence and the actions he or she will take. When the components of empowerment interact with one another, the social environment influences the process. This effect is illustrated best by considering the impact an individual has towards goals of empowerment. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) articulated:

> It is in reflecting on impact that obstacles to success such as discrimination, lack of resources, and institutionalized racism will become glaringly clear, revealing related power dynamics (knowledge) and leading to the refinement of goals. This is the component of the model in which the role of social context is most explicit. (p. 654)

The Process of Empowerment Model as it Relates to Family Literacy

The Empowerment Process Model, proposed by Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) begins with the articulation of meaningful and power-oriented goals. Actions are carried out towards these goals and then the impact is observed and reflected upon. As an individual goes through this process, he or she draws on his or her self-efficacy, competence, and knowledge. This process is not linear; the individual's capacities in the components evolve, resulting in a reiterative process where individuals cycle through components, reevaluating goals and changing actions, and thus their impact. Throughout this process, the influence of the social environment constantly intervenes in the process.

Relating the empowerment process to family literacy, many parents feel unequipped to help their children with literacy development. Parents may participate in family literacy nights in efforts to become more empowered in navigating their child's education. The participation in the family literacy program may be the action toward this goal. The knowledge that parents gain may alter their self-efficacy and competence, which ultimately may impact their goals of an enriched education for their children. Because the process of literacy development is all-encompassing, schools that implement family literacy programs that empower parents to support literacy development benefit from this cooperative partnership.

Early Literacy Development

Gaining an understanding of the process of early literacy development provides valuable insight for educators. The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) provided a useful summarization of early literacy skills. In its 2008 report, NELP explained that before the conventional literacy skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking can even be achieved, early literacy skills or variables must be attained These early literacy skills or variables predict future literacy achievement. These variables are described by NELP (National Institute for Literacy, 2008):

- Alphabet knowledge—knowing the names and the sounds of the printed alphabet.
- Phonological awareness—the ability to distinguish and manipulate distinct sounds of spoken language.
- Rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters or digits—"the ability to rapidly name a sequence of random letters or digits" (p. vii).

- RAN of objects or colors—"the ability to rapidly name a sequence of repeating random sets of pictures of objects (e.g., "car," "tree," "house," "man") or colors" (p. vii).
- Writing or writing name—writing letters, words, or one's own name.
- Concepts about print—knowledge of print conventions such as reading left to write, top to bottom, and book concepts such as title, cover, and author.
- Print knowledge—a combination of the knowledge of the alphabet, concepts about print and early decoding skills.
- Reading readiness—a combination of alphabetic knowledge, concepts of print, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and memory.
- Oral language—the ability to express and understand spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar.
- Visual processing—"the ability to match or discriminate visually presented symbols" (p. viii).
- Phonological memory—the ability to retain and remember spoken information for a short amount of time.

The aforementioned early literacy skills are paramount to literacy development and must be taught and developed using early literacy development practices. Scholars agree that when families foster these early skills at home, through engaging in early literacy development practices, future literacy achievement is likely (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006). The five following early literacy development practices are commonly used to foster the building of early and

conventional literacy skills. Partners in Print (2004), the family literacy program studied in this research project, recognizes these five common early literacy development practices and includes them in its curriculum program (See Table 1 for a list mini-lessons and Table 2 for the early literacy skills and instructional practices addressed in Partners in Print).

Table 1

Partners in Print Literacy Workshops

Session Date	Session Title	Description of mini-lesson
September 27, 2011	Good Books	Award winning books and authors are explored.
	Environmental Print	Familiar print found in the environment is explored.
	How Print Works	Print concepts are modeled.
	Nursery Rhymes	The benefits of nursery rhymes are discussed.
October 11, 2011	Read Aloud	The benefits of reading to your child are discussed.
	Wait Time	Parents are taught to give children time to process.
	Reading Together	Reading in chorus provides immediate feedback.
	Being a Word Solver	Children are taught to build on their knowledge.
October 25, 2011	Joining In	Children join reading aloud when they are able.
	Treasure Hunts	Demonstrates that reading can be fun.
	Praise and Prompts	Parents learn how to support their child's reading.
	Retelling a Story	Parents and children retell a story.
November 15, 2011	Predicting	Families make predictions about story elements.
	Photos	Children learn that photos have a story to tell.
	Silent Reading	Parents and children engage in silent reading.
	What's Missing	Words are left out for children to guess.

Table 2

Early Literacy Skills and Instructional Practices in Partners in Print Literacy Workshops

Workshop Title	Early Literacy Skills [a]	Instructional Practices [a]
Good Books	CAP, RR	RES, SR
Environmental Print	AK, VP	AK, RES
How Print Works	CAP, PK	SR
Nursery Rhymes	PA, PM	PA
Read Aloud	CAP, OL, RR	SR
Wait Time	RAN	SR
Reading Together	CAP, RR	SR, VE
Being a Word Solver	PK, W	AK, SR
Joining In	PK, RAN, RR	SR, VE
Treasure Hunts	PK, RR	W
Praise and Prompts	OL, PK	SR
Retelling a Story	OL, PM	SR, VE
Predicting	SR, VE	OL, RR
Photos	AK, PK, W	RES, W
Silent Reading	RAN, VP	RES
What's Missing	AK, OL, PK, RR	SR, VE

Note. AK= Alphabetic Knowledge; CAP= Concepts About Print; OL= Oral Language; PA=Phonemic Awareness; PK= Print Knowledge; PM=Phonological Memory; RAN= Rapid Automatic Naming; RES= Reading and Writing Resources; RR= Reading Readiness; SR=Shared Reading; VE= Verbal Expression; VP= Visual Processing; W= Writing.

[a]Workshops may address additional literacy skills and practices. Also, some skills and practices overlap.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is when an adult and child share a book together for the sake of enhancing the child's literacy skills. The many variations of shared reading, some formulaic and others more informal, have provided extensive research data that basically indicate that when parents and children read and interact with a book together, the literacy skills of the child are fostered. Dialogic reading, a form of shared reading, provides adults with a basic formula of how to read with a child. As an adult and child read a picture book together, the adult asks questions to the child eliciting the child to expand and respond to the story. The adult provides informal feedback through the discussions, often modeling answers to questions and encouraging the child to take a

more active role in the reading (Marvin & Ogden, 2002). Other less formulaic variations such as storybook reading include bedtime story rituals and child in lap reading (Lundberg, 2006). Shared reading provides numerous benefits to the building of emergent literacy skills, including strengthening oral language skills through conversations about the story and pictures, building concepts about print such as what a title page looks like, and rapid automatic naming which leads to vocabulary development (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Payne, Whitehurst, & Angell, 1994; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Routman, 1991).

Encouragement of Verbal Expression

One of the reasons shared reading is beneficial to children is because it encourages conversation. Bardige (2009) agreed with this notion and has written a book about supporting language development in young children. She stated "The research is clear. Children whose families talk a lot and expect children to do so as well are likely to be more verbal and to amass larger vocabularies at younger ages than children growing up in more laconic families" (p. xiii). Bardige's findings mirror others; children with stronger vocabulary and expressive schools continue to demonstrate stronger literacy skills (Bardige, 2009; Dickinson & Beals, 1994; Glasgow & Farrell, 2007; Lundberg, 2006).

Researchers have found other benefits from verbal expression as well. Lundberg (2006) argued that children who have been spoken to frequently tend to have a stronger social and emotional skills, partly because of their agility with communication. Bardige (2009) reported that the intellectual growth stimulated from frequent verbal expression

persists and is reflected in future standardized language test scores of third and fourth grade students. Bardige also explained what type of talk is the most helpful. She shared that most families participate in "business talk," the commands, directions, and short responses that coordinate daily living. The "play talk" or extra talk, however, is the communication that provides for the most enriching experiences. This type of talk is characterized with more open-ended questions and rich language. Bardige provided an example of an uncle and his three-year old nephew talking about a toy fire truck. The uncle naturally extends his nephew's vocabulary with words such as engine, cab, ladder, assemble, and steering wheel. The uncle also stimulates his nephew's growth by providing suggestions of how to play with the toy. Bardige's (2009) advocacy for play talk or extra talk is precisely the type of verbal expression that builds literacy skills. She argued that "*more talk makes the difference* because *more talk is richer talk"* (p. 9).

Development of Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the awareness of sounds or phonemes, the smallest units of sound in a language. Different from phonics, phonemic awareness is associated with understanding how sounds are manipulated and produced. For example, a child with phonemic awareness can segment the word "fish" into 3 distinct sounds: /f/-/i/-/sh/. Nicholson (2006) explained that phonemes are abstract concepts which are why phonemic awareness is not naturally acquired and must be taught. Though there is debate regarding this notion, meta-analyses show that children receive great benefit from phonemic awareness instruction. Several literacy practices build phonemic awareness. Examples include playing games such as "I spy" where children look for words that

begin or end the same way; practicing "Turtle Talk" where children say a word very slowly breaking it up into each sound; and participating in "Making and Breaking" where children take one word (such as "and") and make it into a new word (sand) or break up the word (an) (Nicholson, 2006). Literacy teachers often refer to phonemic awareness activities as playing with the language. In fact, playing with the sounds of language through rhyming games, nursery rhymes, songs, chants, and poems are precisely the tools to building this awareness of sounds (Bardige, 2009). These latter-mentioned activities are often the focus of many family literacy activities (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Partners in Print, 2004; Payne et al., 1994; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009).

Teaching of the Alphabetic Principal

The phonemes in alphabetically written languages are represented by alphabet letters that form words. Learning, identifying, exploring, writing, and sounding out alphabet letters are all activities associated with the alphabetic principal. Data continue to show that children who have a strong grasp of the alphabet and can identify alphabet letters when they enter traditional schooling are predicted to have stronger literacy success than those who do not. Having a strong sense of the alphabet means being able to sing alphabet songs, identify letters out of order when found in books, puzzles, games, and toys, differentiate between letters and numbers, write letters, name letters quickly, and recognize more prevalent letters such as the ones found in one's name. A plethora of literature, including those advocating for family literacy programs, provide activities that promote the building of alphabet knowledge. Common activities include exploring alphabet books, singing alphabet songs, cutting and pasting alphabet letters, forming the

letter shapes, and observing traffic signs, billboards, and license plates for letters (Bardige, 2009).

Opportunities for Writing

The practice of beginning to write letters or words is a writing skill that predicts future literacy achievement. The reason for this is because when children are beginning to form letters and then words, they are actually utilizing and strengthening their alphabetic knowledge. For example, when a child attempts to write a common word independently, he must be able to match a sound to a letter, identify that letter, and then form the letter. The child needs to have a grasp of the principles of the alphabet to perform this task. Once children begin to write words, conventionally or more developmentally (meaning that the words may not be spelled correctly yet), they need to understand that these words represent a meaning or concept (Routman, 1991). Understanding that words have meanings requires children to use verbal expression, reiterating the fact that literacy is a multi-faceted recursive concept (Bardige, 2009).

Adults can promote writing at home or at school, through providing children with opportunities to write. In early literacy development, children need to be allowed to write developmentally. This means that writing may not look like it does traditionally with paper and pencil being the tools for the task. Instead, the tools for writing may be the child's fingers, chalk, paint, or sand. The actual writing tasks must be meaningful to the child. Examples may include a child-composed sign on a bedroom door, a word written in the sand, or a handwritten nametag labeling ownership. Family literacy programs, such as Partners in Print, provide activities that recognize the development needs of

beginning writers and provide families with ideas that make the task of writing joyful, natural, and meaningful (Partners in Print, 2004).

Availability of Reading and Writing Resources

With the understanding of the many ways early literacy development can be fostered, it is imperative for children to be provided with reading and writing resources. These resources can be more traditional such picture books, art supplies, and educational toys and games. Or, these resources can be less traditional, such as food labels, church bulletins, and junk mail. The important factor is for families to make the connection that the resources around them can be utilized to foster early literacy development.

Instructional Strategies for Monolingual and Bilingual/Immersion Students

Cummins (1980), a scholar in language acquisition theory, provided a useful lens for family literacy programs, particularly the program utilized in the current research study. Cummins theorized that when a child learns a second language (L2), she utilizes her cognitive and academic resources from her primary language (L1). Cummins (1980) stated, "Because L1 and L2 CALP [Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency] are manifestations of the same underlying dimension, previous learning of literacy-related functions of language (in L1) will predict future learning of these functions (in L2)" (p. 179). For this reason, the family literacy program Partners in Print, is implemented in the two dominant languages taught at the school site, Spanish and English. Families are encouraged to attend the workshops in their primary language, because research finds that children need to have a strong background in their primary language for successful acquisition of the second language. In the study by Atwill et al. (2010), data were

examined to explore the effects the native vocabulary had on the transfer of phonemic awareness skills in the second language. Atwill et al. found that children with stronger primary language skills were able to grasp the same skills in L2 more successfully. A study in Europe by Yazici, Ilter, and Glover (2010) compared the L2 skills of preschool children who were and were not strongly immersed in their primary language when educated in their country of origin. The preschool students with weaker L1 skills attended preschool in a country that didn't foster their primary language development. Yazici, Ilter, and Glover found that the students with stronger L1 skills were much more successful in learning the second, targeted language once they entered compulsory schooling. Yazici et al. recommended that L2 preschoolers attend preschool where L1 is fostered and strengthened, so that when the preschoolers transition into regular school, they will have more successful outcomes with L2 skills. This notion of building the cognitive resources in L1, so that these language skills will form a strong conceptual foundation that will aide in future L1 and L2 development, is why Partners in Print recommends families to attend sessions in the primary language.

Home Literacy Environments: The Rationale for Family Literacy Programs

Phillips et al. (2006) explained that most family literacy programs are implemented in efforts to enrich the home literacy environment. A child's home literacy environment (HLE) is defined as the physical, interpersonal, emotional and motivational environment pertaining to literacy in which a child lives (Edwards & Pleasants, 1997; Wasik & Hindman, 2010). Weigel et al. (2006) explained that the home is where

children first become familiar with literacy. Children observed their family members interacting with literacy and begin to engage in it themselves (Morrow, 1995).

Characterizing the Home Literacy Environments

Morrow, Paratore, and Tracey (as cited in Morrow, 1995) defined family literacy as the following:

> Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. Sometimes, family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children "get things done." These events might include using drawings or writing to share ideas; composing notes or letters to communicate messages; making lists; reading; and following directions; or sharing stores and ideas through conversations, reading, and writing. Family literacy may be initiated purposefully by a parent or may occur spontaneously as parents and children go about the business of their daily lives. Family literacy activities may also reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage of the families involved. (pp. 7-8)

If educators remain loyal to the tenets of this definition of family literacy, all forms of literacy practices, whether these practices are traditional (such as reading a bedtime story), or less traditional (such as reading the back of a cereal box during breakfast), should be recognized as worthwhile.

An abundance of research, however, disregards all but one mode of literacy and advocates for a more school-like, traditional view of a home literacy environment where book reading is paramount (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Scarborough,

Dobrich, & Hager, 1991; Payne et al., 1994). Rodríguez-Brown (2009) critiqued this notion that traditional literacy practices hold more value than less traditional ones. She reminded educators that schools and teachers tend to value specific literacy practices that may not be exercised in all homes. She stated "children from homes where literacy practices [do] not match those of the mainstream teacher and classroom often [experience] academic difficulties due to discontinuities and incongruence between learning at home and learning at school" (p. 36). So instead of considering a non-mainstream child's home rich in literacy, it is viewed as limited when in actuality it may provide ample learning opportunities. For example, some families do not visit the library on a regular basis, but they do consult family recipe books often. When schools recognize less traditional forms of literacy as worthy, they can find a common bridge in early literacy support. Rodríguez-Brown (2009) asserted that teachers and schools must value and respect the "cognitive flexibility" these children possess to be able to function differently in school than at home, an asset that strengthens their learning when valued as such (p.36).

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (2005) have dedicated themselves to this theory of "funds of knowledge" (p. 71). Funds of knowledge are what Moll et al. refer to as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 72). Moll et al.'s position is that educators need to become aware of these funds of knowledge so that they can use them to activate prior knowledge during instruction, a basic pedagogical strategy. Using these funds of knowledge that students offer dignifies the student, impressing upon

them the value of their cultural and cognitive resources. Considering avenues to tap into funds of knowledge when designing family literacy programs benefits the family literacy program in the same pedagogical manner. When parents and their knowledge offerings are valued by schools, everyone benefits. Rodríguez-Brown (2009) imparted that it is commonly known that schools need the help of the parents to foster literacy development. When the parents use their funds of knowledge, prior knowledge is activated which as a result builds cognition. Using language as an example, when a Spanish speaking parent is "allowed" to use his own language to provide a rich, expressive discourse at home, a child's expressive language is fostered. Research has shown that students who are adept in emergent literacy skills in one language can easily adapt to a new language because the schema is already established. So when parents use their primary language, a fund of knowledge, to provide learning support to their child, increased learning results. Valuing all families' funds of knowledge is crucial for family literacy programs, because research has shown that children have greater literacy outcomes when they become familiar with a culture of literacy. Rodríguez-Brown (2009) explained that children need to see literacy in action and they need to experiment with it. A supportive home environment that provides children the opportunities to explore, play with, and interact with literacy greatly fosters literacy development. For example, parents who use their dominant language are much more capable of providing the rich home literacy environment than when they use their second language. Research has shown that when parents whose primary language is not English have tried to negate their home language and push English, efforts have failed, resulting in a poor home literacy environment due to a near-absence of language.

Lynch (2009) supported the funds of knowledge perspective in her study of low-income families and their home literacy environments. She maintained that it is a fallacy to think that low-income families do not provide rich home literacy environments. She found that many of these families participated in literacy activities such as writing lists, reading the television guide, telling stories, reading horoscopes, and reading labels. She suggests that educators embrace the types of print experiences low-income families engage in and use these experiences as a springboard into more literacy learning. Similarly, Ortiz and Ordonez-Jasis (2005) reminded educators to value the types of literacy activities happening in homes, and to use these authentic experiences as a mechanism to further explore literacy.

Conceptualizing Home Literacy Environments

Studying the home literacy environments (HLE) leads to the need to operationalize a conceptualization of home literacy environments so that research needs are met (van Steensel, 2006). Several researchers have attempted to quantify and/or qualify a conceptualization of home literacy environments, a difficult task considering the varied modes of literacy engagement (Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan , 2002; Leichter (as cited in Edwards & Pleasants, 1997); van Steensel, 2006). Leichter (as cited in Edwards & Pleasants, 1997) described three broad categories of how the home literacy environment is conceived that parallel Rogoff's (1995) planes of development: the physical environment, interpersonal interaction, and the emotional and motivational climate. The physical environment, according to Leichter (cited in Edwards & Pleasants, 1997), consists of the resources, types of stimulation, and physical arrangements that

involve literacy. The interpersonal interaction cluster consists of literacy opportunities that involve interaction, such as conversations, explanations, and corrections, with family members. The emotional and motivational climate category consists of the emotional relationships in the household, and the effects of the attitudes leaders of the household have toward literacy practices.

Burgess et al., (2002) attempted to establish the profiles of the home literacy environment by describing four types: the limiting environment, the literacy interface conceptualization, the passive HLE conceptualization, and the active HLE. Burgess et al. defined the limiting environment profile as an environment that has limited resources due to low income, poor attitudes toward education, or limited literacy abilities. Burgess et al. characterized the literacy interface conceptualization as an environment where parents participate in literacy activities in order to expose children to literacy or to reflect the value parents place on the importance of literacy. The passive HLE conceptualization establishes an environment where parents model and use literacy, but in an indirect manner. The literacy usage is not designed specifically to teach the child, although learning may occur. The active HLE conceptualization, on the other hand, establishes an environment where parents actively engage and foster literacy development. Burgess et al. found that children from homes characterized with active HLEs gained greater developmental outcomes. Their study indicated the demand for schools to focus on encouraging and supporting homes to establish more active home literacy environments.

Efforts to conceptualize home literacy environments are also reflected in van Steensel's study (2006). In van Steensel's research, three profiles were established to

characterize home literacy environments: a rich home literacy environment, a child-directed home literacy environment, and a poor home literacy environment. A rich home literacy environment was described as one where children engaged and observed in a wide variety of literacy activities such as shared reading (parent and child reading together), modeled reading (child sees parent reading for parent's personal reasons), visiting the library, and watching educational television programs. A child-directed HLE profile reflected an environment where literacy activities were practiced, but not as frequently as they were in the rich profile. Also, the activities tended to be those that the schools encouraged, such as shared reading. The third profile, a poor home literacy environment, consisted of an environment in which limited literacy activities occurred. It was found that children with a rich home literacy environment consistently scored higher on all of the literacy tests in van Steensel's study.

The Effects of Home Literacy Environments

Numerous studies articulated that the home literacy environment influences future success in emergent literacy skills (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006); and thus, researchers have conducted a plethora of studies on the effects of home literacy environments on children's literacy skills. Most studies have found that enriching home literacy environments foster stronger literacy skills in children (Burgess, 2005; Phillips et al., 2006; van Steensel, 2006; Weigel et al., 2006). Weigel et al. investigated the home environments of 85 families through parent questionnaires and standardized literacy tests. They discovered that children had a stronger print knowledge and a higher interest in reading when their parents read to them

often, took them to the library, played literacy games, and provided books at home. In the study where van Steensel (2006) categorized home literacy environments into the profiles of a rich home literacy environment, a child-directed home literacy environment, and a poor home literacy environment, children with a rich home literacy environment consistently scored higher on all of the literacy tests. Roberts et al. (2005) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the home literacy environment of low income African American children. They used the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) instrument which "…measures the primary caregiver's emotional and verbal responsivity, acceptance of the child's behavior, organization of the environment, academic and language stimulation, and maternal involvement with the child" (pp. 350-351). Roberts et al. found that high scores on the HOME instrument predicted higher early literacy and language skills. Burgess (2005) surveyed almost 500 teenage mothers and found that mothers who provided literacy experiences at home shaped more successful literacy outcomes for their children. In an earlier study, Burgess et al. (2002), sampled 115 preschoolers on their oral language, phonological sensitivity and word decoding skills. Their results indicated that children with active HLEs are more likely to have the stronger aforementioned skills. Ezell, Gonzales, and Randolph (2000) investigated the extent to which home and school environment impacted 48 migrant Mexican American preschoolers' emergent literacy skills (knowledge of environmental print, letter identification, and concepts about print). After assessing these skills and interviewing parents and teachers, they performed multiple regression analysis which suggested that both the home and school environments affected children's

performance. Further analysis found that "it was the conditions in the home rather than at the Head Start center that accounted for better performance on both the concepts about print and environmental print measures" (p. 152). Acknowledging the significance of home literacy environments, Griffin and Morrison (1997), designed a psychometric home literacy environment measure to evaluate the contribution on an HLE on literacy performance. Their new scale investigated the frequency of home literacy activities such as the number of library visits, adults at home who read, reading materials available to the child, shared adult-child reading experiences, and hours of television watched. Data were collected from 295 kindergarteners, and Griffin and Morrison's predictions were validated. Their HLE measurement predicted differences in early literacy skills of children. Children from homes with more enriching HLEs were predicted to have better literacy outcomes.

Part of the home literacy environment, as Leichter (cited in Edwards & Pleasants, 1997) described, is the opportunities for children to interact with family members in a manner that fosters literacy. The emotional, intellectual, and motivational environment that the adults provide may or may not create a stimulating environment (Lynch, 2009). In other words, children who come from homes where parents are highly literate and engage in personal literacy activities, such as reading the newspaper daily, tend to perform better on literacy measures. Lynch reported that children whose parents have had less than a high school education tend to perform poorly in school. Cassidy et al. (2004) agreed that the adult's literacy skills play an important role in their child's development of literacy skills. For this reason Lynch (2009) and Cassidy et al. have

proposed family literacy programs that encompass an adult literacy component. Summarizing, Cook-Cottone's (2004) position mirrored sociocultural learning theory when she explained why the family is an essential part of a child's learning environment:

> The family (as the primary intersection of self, others, society, and culture) is uniquely positioned to efficiently and effectively contribute to a child's knowledge acquisition. Capitalizing on the power of this intersection, family-based literacy programs allow for the construction of literacy knowledge within a context consistent with the child's ongoing socio-cultural experience. (p. 209).

Family Literacy Programs

Family Literacy Programs are generally defined as programs where parents or caregivers are involved in the literacy processes of their children (Cassidy et al., 2004; Cook-Cottone, 2004; Phillips et al., 2006). Phillips et al. explained that there are many different types of family literacy programs, and that the underlying commonality among all family literacy programs is that parents or caregivers involve themselves in the literacy development of their child. Phillips et al. classified family literacy programs into three categories: programs that demonstrate to parents how to help their children with literacy skills at home; programs that enrich the adult's literacy skills; and combination programs where both the child's and the parent's literacy skills are addressed. Often the variance in these types of programs results from the purposes, perspectives, ideologies, and histories; and although there may be debate regarding which design works best, Cook-Cottone (2004) reminded us that what is important is that "the families make the difference" (p. 208).

Purposes of Family Literacy Programs

Auerbach (1995) cautioned that educators must not fall in the trap of thinking they are helping families when they may be doing the exact opposite. In her studies, she has found that all family literacy programs aim to help, but some programs fail to do so. For this reason, educators must evaluate their purposes in providing family literacy programs. Auerbach stated that there are two main purposes: intervention and empowerment.

Intervention. When educators provide family literacy programs as a form of intervention, the results can be quite detrimental for two reasons. First, schools may be mistaken and assume that a home is not promoting literacy when it actually is. This is because many home practices are not as valued as others, so it appears as if nothing is occurring at home when the issue is a mismatch between home practices and school practices. Second, if a home literacy environment is limited, it is usually because of a "…lack of social, political, and economic support for parents in dealing with housing, health, and other social problems that puts children at risk—as opposed to lack of parental support for children's literacy development" (Auerbach, 1995, p. 15). Burgess (2005) reiterated that when home literacy environments are lacking, it is usually the result of life circumstances, such as poverty or poor mental health, not because of a lack of motivation or desire. Providing an intervention program does not address the root problem. As a precaution, Auerbach (1995) urged educators to be aware of the following assumptions:

- "Language-minority students come from literacy-impoverished homes where education is not valued" (p. 14).
- Literacy learning can only occur in one direction, from adult to child.
- Children can only succeed when parents provide school-like activities at home.
- If a child is not developing adequately, it is not the fault of the school, but the fault of the family.
- "Parents' problems and cultural values are obstacles to their children's development" (p. 21).

Auerbach argued that each of these assumptions is not grounded in research and then shared the research findings that suggested that home literacy environments can be empowering when society addresses the aforementioned social problems.

Empowerment. When family literacy programs are created for the purpose of empowering and enriching families, family literacy programs "…can become a vehicle for promoting change…" (Auerbach, 1995, p. 26). Rodríguez-Brown (2009) provided a thorough description of enriching family literacy programs. The paramount contrast was the respect given to families. Empowering family literacy programs respects cultural and linguistic differences and actually encourages use of the primary language, based on the idea that adults are better equipped with modeling literacy skills in the language they are literate in. During empowering family literacy programs, parents are asked to build on their funds of knowledge with the acknowledgement that the parents are equipped with literacy skills, though they may differ from the mainstream. New ideas may be

introduced, but these ideas do not subtract parents' teaching, but rather, add to it. Rodríguez-Brown (2009) provided an example a family literacy session that is additive:

> The session begins by asking parents to share some of the songs that they teach their children. Then parents discuss why this is important and what children learn when they sing songs. Many parents realize that songs help children learn new words and about the concept of rhyming. At this point, the facilitators can ask parents to reflect on how these skills relate to literacy learning. Through the conversation that ensues, parents learn that when children learn rhymes, they are also acquiring the ability to recognize and distinguish between different sounds in the language. Although parents might not understand the words phonemic awareness, this discussion allows them to talk about it using their own discourse while increasing their own understanding of why these activities are important in literacy developments. (pp. 83-84)

Common sense dictates that when parents feel empowered, they find more success in working with their children. For this reason, family literacy models that adopt an enrichment perspective tend to have more lasting effects.

The History of Family Literacy Programs

The notion that families should be involved with their children's literacy development is a relatively new idea. In their chronological review, Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006) explained that until the mid-1900s, parents were encouraged to leave the learning to the schools. Padak, Sapin, and Baycich (2002) shared that in the early to mid twentieth century, reading instruction was viewed as highly technical, a skill

better left for the professional teachers. Parents were discouraged from helping their children; teachers were taught in Methods texts that parents were not knowledgeable enough to help. Padak et al. (2002) continued, "adding to the home-school disconnection was the prevailing view that children's reading readiness was solely a function of their mental ages, as determined by newly available IQ tests" (p. 1). This idea began to change when research in the 1960s revealed that some children were more ready to begin formal education than others (Crawford and Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Books such as Dolores Durkin's 1966 classic *Children Who Read Early* introduced educators to the field of emergent literacy, a field that challenged the notion that the home literacy environment should be overlooked (Padak et al., 2002). Researchers began studying the family environment and found that some characteristics of home environments were more conducive to developing emergent literacy skills than others. This understanding spread, and by the 1980s, "family literacy" became an official term in educational vocabulary, and educators began creating various family literacy programs (Crawford and Zygouris-Coe, 2006). The federal government participated in the growth of family literacy by legislating and funding many family literacy initiatives including, Even Start and Head Start (Padak et al., 2002). Schools and institutions across the nation began implementing family literacy programs. Some programs invited parents and children to come to out-of-school events, facilitated by teachers. Others encouraged parents and children to interact in literacy projects at home. Still others incorporated adult literacy and parenting components into the program. Currently, a myriad of programs and models exist, some leftover from past movements and government mandates, and some embracing up-to-date

researched-based techniques. The thread that ties these programs together is the knowledge that literacy development is strengthened when families are viewed as partners in the education process of their children (Crawford and Zygouris-Coe, 2006).

Models of Family Literacy Programs

All family literacy programs share some common features. They all aim to build literacy skills in children in efforts to establish future literacy success. They also all aim to enrich the home literacy environment. Aside from these similarities, different features emerge in family literacy programs that result in different models (Phillips et al., 2006).

Comprehensive models. The comprehensive model, also referred to as two-generation programs (Duch, 2005), has three main characteristics: an early-childhood program, a parenting education component, and an adult education component. Programs such as federally funded Head Start and Even Start, which aim to curtail the conditions of poverty, are examples of this model (Duch, 2005; Nickse, 1990; Rodríguez-Brown, 2009). In these programs, preschoolers are enrolled in early childhood programs and their parents participate in adult education courses and parenting classes. In comprehensive models, it is common for facilitators to visit homes and provide job training and counseling. Duch argued that because these programs demand a wide variety of services and resources of families that often lack emotional and financial health, success of these programs varies.

Child-centered models. In child-centered models, parents are trained in some manner on how to strengthen the literacy skills of their children. Child-centered programs directly affect the children because the children are the primary recipients of

the services. Parents participate, but the focus is on improving the educational outcomes of the child. The extensive amount of literature studying the effects of different child-centered models, suggests that these models are widely used. The literature also suggests a myriad of ways these programs are carried out, from the trainers, to the format of the program, to the participants (Cadieux & Boudreault, 2005; Cook-Cottone, 2004; Nistler & Maiers, 2000; Phillips et al., 2006; Saracho, 2008; St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). Child-centered models can be organized and taught by educators or parents. Cook-Cottone's (2004) research studied a program where parents, trained beforehand, facilitated as parent mentors. St. Clair & Jackson (2006) investigated a child-centered family literacy program where instructors tailored the lessons for parents based on their kindergarteners' curriculum. Other programs, like *Early Literacy: a Lullaby of Sounds and Words*, were designed for massive use; this program designed educational brochures for families on how to enrich the home literacy environment and over 600 families received brochures (Koger & Shedd, 2005). Some programs, however, focus on a smaller, targeted population. Saracho (2008) studied a family literacy program where all participants were fathers and their kindergarten children. Regardless of the number of participants, the most widely used format is where parents attend evening or after-school lessons that teach parents how to supplement literacy learning through activities such as shared reading, sight word games, decoding activities, and authentic writing (Cadieux & Boudreault, 2005; Cook-Cottone, 2004; Nistler & Maiers, 2000; Saracho, 2008; St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). The current study for this dissertation project, the child-centered family literacy program Partners in Print (2004), followed this format.

Adult education models. A less common model is the adult-centered model which focuses on adult education. These programs are usually geared toward the goals of the adults (Phillips et al., 2006). Cassidy et al. (2004) studied such a program designed at Texas A & M University. While graduate students, with literacy backgrounds, provided individualized tutoring to parents, the parents' children were cared for by undergraduates. Cassidy and his colleagues found this model to be particularly strong because parents were able to choose what literacy skills they needed to learn. Nickse (1990) explained that these models usually offer direct services to adults but children do not regularly participate. Rodríguez-Brown (2009) provided more examples of adult education models. The Parent as Teachers (PAT) program focuses on enhancing child development and school achievement through educating parents. PAT trains parents to become mentors to other parents. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home-based program where parents learn to create a more cognitively-stimulating environment for their young children. Although these programs do not explicitly teach literacy skills to children, they are learned indirectly (Rodríguez-Brown (2009).

Combination models. A fourth model combines adult literacy learning and children's literacy development. Phillips et al. (2006) followed the Learning Together program where parents and children were trained separately on literacy skills for the first part of the session and then reunited for a joint session where they practiced the skills just learned. Larrotta & Gainer (2008) implemented and reported on their Parent Literacy Project which aimed for parents to gain knowledge and then share it with their children.

This program invited Spanish speaking Mexican immigrant parents to attend after school workshops where they would learn adult comprehension skills through reading culturally relevant texts. The parents' homework, then, was to read a similar text with their children at home. Their model, as well as many of the aforementioned, provides a plethora of ways family literacy programs organize to accomplish their purpose of enriching the home literacy environment and fostering children's literacy acquisition.

Different Typologies

Nickse (1990) categorized family literacy programs slightly differently. She defined four types of programs. Type 1 programs directly teach the adult while the children receive direct instruction in early childhood programs. The Even Start Family Literacy Model, mentioned earlier, falls under this category (Rodríguez-Brown, 2009). Type 2 programs are more indirect and focus on the enjoyment of literacy. These programs are typically held at libraries, center on book talks or literacy projects (Nickse, 1990). The Beginning with Books program is an example. It provides free books to low-income parents at shelters, clinics, food banks, and child-care programs in an effort to encourage daily reading. Another example is the Read-Aloud Parent Club. This program's goals are to help parents feel more skillful and confident with their reading-aloud ability, to encourage more reading, and to stimulate literacy development. Parents usually meet weekly and receive free books and training (Rodríguez-Brown, 2009). Type 3 programs usually offer direct services to adults, but children do not regularly participate (Nickse, 1990). Type 3 programs are similar to the adult education models mentioned earlier. The aforementioned HIPPY program where families with limited

education are visited at home is an example. Finally, Type 4 programs directly affect the children because they are the primary recipients of the services. Parents may participate, but the focus is on the child. The no-longer-funded Early Reading First program implemented by the U.S. federal government falls under this type. This program's goal was to enhance early child education at early childhood centers (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Outcomes of Family Literacy Programs

The overarching purpose of family literacy programs is to enrich the home literacy environment, which is linked to future literacy achievement (Phillips et al., 2006). However, the literature reflects more outcomes than solely the enhancement of the home literacy environment. Some family literacy programs have established academic, social, and emotional growth. Examining the outcomes of the various researched programs provides insight for future family literacy program implementation.

Affecting the home literacy environment. Many researchers examined family literacy programs to discover if the home literacy environment had been altered after participating in the family literacy program. Koger and Shedd (2005) used pre- and post home literacy environment surveys to find out if their educational brochure distributed to hundreds of Michigan families improved the home literacy environment. Quantitative data analysis suggested that parents scored significantly higher on post-tests signifying that their family literacy program increased literacy-fostering home activities. Ezell et al. (2000) surveyed parents using a home literacy environment survey to discover if the home literacy environment was linked to their children's literacy achievement. They

concluded that the home literacy environment, even more so than the school learning environment, had a strong influence on their child's emergent skills.

Qualitative data provided similar evidence. Through interviews, Nistler and Maiers (2000) discovered that parents were practicing the literacy activities they had learned in trainings at home with their children. The parent participants in Cook-Cottone's (2004) study who attended workshops reported that they gained reading strategies and learned how to foster literacy at home. Parents, however, gained more than just knowledge of how to enrich the home literacy environment. Themes of empowerment emerged from reviewing the literature.

Parent empowerment. Although quantitative data are sparse, a multitude of qualitative data exists that suggest that parents felt empowered after participating in various family literacy programs. Nistler and Maiers (2000) reported on a during-school family literacy program where parents came to their child's classroom to learn specific strategies and practice them immediately with their child. Interviews indicated that parents felt more confident about the school environment and gained a better sense of what their child's experiences were at school. The theme of gained confidence was evident in other studies. In their longitudinal study examining the effects of their program, Phillips et al. (2006) interviewed parents and found that parents felt more confident in helping their children. Parents in other studies reported similar feelings, claiming that their participation made them feel more confident and competent (Cadieux & Boudreault, 2005; Cook-Cottone, 2004). Increased satisfaction and motivation were also sentiments parents expressed (Cadieux & Boudreault, 2005). Cassidy et al.'s

findings also supported the argument that family literacy programs are a vehicle for parent empowerment. Congruently, Rodríguez-Brown (2009) reported that one of the greatest benefits in her widely used and university-backed community program Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando) was the increased parent networking and the increased sense of self efficacy in parents. She explained that many of the participants were immigrants with limited support systems and mainstream knowledge about the goings-on of life in Chicago. After participating in Project FLAME, parents became friends, learned to drive and navigate the city, acquired new jobs, and so on. She concluded, "The self-efficacy these women gained while supporting their children's literacy learning at home expanded to include obtaining jobs and a sense of fulfillment they never imagined" (Rodríguez-Brown, 2009, p. 111).

Academic improvement. Researchers who have studied the efficacy of family literacy programs generally have found successful outcomes. Due to the socio-cultural nature of family literacy programs, it is often difficult to capture the benefits with quantitative measures. However, some studies in the literature found positive quantitative results. First, St. Clair and Jackson (2006) studied a child-centered family literacy program where parents, who were mostly migrant workers, were trained after school on literacy concepts based around their children's kindergarten curriculum. Researchers used the *Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey* which broadly tests knowledge and English language skills, and found that the group of families receiving intervention made larger gains in language skills over a two-year time period. Second, Phillips et al. (2006) found that the lower 70% of children, based on pre-test scores, benefited from

their family literacy program. This percentage was found through reductive analysis using the children's scores from the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (3rd Ed., Forms IIIA & IIIB),* the *Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-2 Forms A & B), (2nd Ed.),* and the *Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-3 Forms A & B), (3rd Ed.).* Third, Cook-Cottone (2004) tested children on their sight word knowledge before and after program implementation. Using tests of significance, it was suggested that sight word knowledge of the third and fifth graders grew as a result of the program. Finally, Cadieux and Boudreault (2005) also discovered statistically significant academic gains from children after family participation in a paired-reading family literacy program.

Other studies use qualitative measures to analyze the results of family literacy programs. Saracho (2008) provided a case study of 25 fathers who attended a biweekly workshop for fathers who wanted to build the literacy skills of their children. Through conversations and interviews, Saracho found that the fathers in the study improved their child's literary environment. Cook-Cottone (2004) stated that all participants reported that both the parent's and the child's literacy skills improved during the after-school program where parent mentors, trained by literacy teachers, provided literacy instruction. Similarly, Cassidy et al. (2004) studied the effects of a program that provided one-to-one adult tutoring to parents with limited English skills. They found, through self-survey and interviews, that every participant found the program beneficial toward literacy outcomes.

Other gains. Although many family literacy programs may aim to improve literacy outcomes in children, social and emotional gains have also resulted. St. Clair (2008) argued that the success of family literacy programs should be measured not only

for human capital, such as test scores, but also for social capital. He defined social capital as "…the network of enabling social relationships widely accepted as a precursor of learning and poverty reduction." (p. 84). St. Clair argued that social skills, such as trusting one another, practicing patience, and listening to one another, are gained through family literacy programs. He furthered his argument by stating that a healthy society is one where social relationships are valued. St. Clair concludes that "an evaluative approach that accounts for both human and social capital is the best hope of representing the effects of literacy education fully and fairly…" (p. 93).

Many researchers have found themes of community-building emerge from listening to parent reports of family literacy programs. Saracho (2008) reports on a family literacy program that invited fathers to attend workshops so that they could help their kindergarteners. Many fathers reported a sense of belonging to the school, a sentiment that is not always shared by school dads. The immigrant mothers in Larrotta and Gainer's (2008) study reported that attending Parent Literacy Project helped them understand the school practices in their new country. In addition, some family literacy programs even affect the trainers and teachers. Teacher Angela Maiers shared that her instruction and the way she viewed her students changed after participating in the family literacy program that enlightened her understanding of her students' families (Nistler and Maiers, 2000).

A Transformation of Participation Perspective for Family Literacy Programs

In light of the research regarding family literacy programs, when designing and implementing a family literacy program, it is imperative to establish a program designed

to elicit a factor which the evidence suggests is the fruit of family literacy programs, human capacity. Although the literature includes many examples of children making literacy gains as a result of participation in family literacy programs, the greater gains are still social in nature. Family literacy programs are a tool for capitalizing upon an underutilized resource, parents. Rogoff (2003) (and many social learning theorists before her) continues to articulate that the environment in which one engages influences all learning. An individual's environment is not an empty vacuum; instead it is complete with human interactions, culture, the community, and personal influences that reiteratively alter every experience. If educational programs are loyal to their cause to educate all, they need to understand that a child's world is directly influenced by the parents. This understanding should lead to the nurturing of a partnership between schools and families. One catalyst to creating a family and school partnership is through family literacy programs. Not only do family literacy programs open the door to a sense of school community, but they also have the added benefit of enriching and empowering the lives of the families involved.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess whether or not the family literacy program, Partners in Print, was effective toward meeting its program goals of (a) enriching the home literacy environment of the families that attended the program and (b) empowering and educating parents so that they are more confident in their ability to engage in literacy development at home (Partners in Print, 2004). Partners in Print is a family literacy program that invites parents and their children to the school in the evening to learn new strategies to foster literacy development at home. To discover the impact of Partners in Print, a survey method with qualitative and quantitative components was employed. The advantage to using a survey with both qualitative and quantitative questions is similar to the advantage of using a triangulation mixed methods design. Gay et al. (2009) explained that the advantage of using a triangulation mixed-methods design is that mixed-methods research designs assist researchers in completely understanding the phenomenon being studied. They wrote:

> The main advantage of this method is that the strengths of the qualitative data (e.g., data about the context) offset the weaknesses of the quantitative data (e.g., ecological validity), and the strengths of the quantitative data (e.g., generalizability) offset the weaknesses of the qualitative data (e.g., context dependence). (Gay et al., 2009, p. 463)

This research project used a one-group pre-test, post-test design. The one group, the families who attended Partners in Print, was pre-tested, exposed to the treatment (Partners in Print) and then tested again using a qualitative and quantitative survey developed by the researcher: the *Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey*. The survey responses were analyzed to gain insight as well as a deeper understanding of parent perceptions of the program, to inform future program implementation. In addition, a document analysis of the program handouts was employed to discover if the program goals of empowerment and education were reflected in the handouts. To access parent perceptions of empowerment and education, two survey questions were added to the post-test data.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study of the family literacy program, Partners in Print. The Partners in Print program guide states that the overarching program goal "is to educate and empower parents so they can help develop their children's literacy" (Partners in Print, 2004, p. 9). Both research questions aimed to evaluate whether these goals had been met when parents consistently participated in Partners in Print. All families were invited to attend all four family nights. For this study, consistent participation was defined at attending at least three of the four family literacy nights. The reason consistent participation was defined as 75% of attendance or higher was because this amount of attendance was a reasonable expectation placed on families of kindergarten and first grade children. Expecting 100% attendance would not account for life circumstances that may interfere with the family nights. Similarly, accepting 50%

attendance would not allow for an adequate amount of saturation of the treatment of Partners in Print. Therefore, defining consistent participation as 75%, or three of the four nights, was considered an acceptable amount of attendance. The research questions were:

1. What impact does consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, have toward empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development?
2. What is the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families have consistently participated in Partners in Print, a school-based family literacy program?

Hypotheses

The study tested two hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that parents who consistently attended Partners in Print would feel more empowered to help their child with literacy development after completion of the program. Consistent participation, the treatment variable, was defined as attending at least three of the four family literacy nights. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) clarified the definition of empowerment, the dependent variable for research purposes. They defined empowerment as a recursive process in which a person, in need of power, aims to gain power by setting, acting upon, and reflecting on personally meaningful goals. During this process, which is constantly influenced by social circumstances, the person builds and draws on her/his evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence. Applying this definition to the current study, parents' goals for attending Partners in Print may have been to gain knowledge so that

they would feel effective and become competent in helping their children build literacy skills.

Second, the researcher hypothesized that families who consistently participated in Partners in Print would report having a more enriched home literacy environment after attending Partners in Print. Consistent participation was defined as attending at least three of the four family literacy nights. The treatment variable was the consistent participation in Partners in Print family nights. The dependent variable was quality of the home literacy environment as reported on the surveys. Families that reported higher instances of reading to children, talking about books, exploring the alphabet, promoting phonemic awareness, encouraging writing, and providing books at home would reflect a higher quality of the home literacy environment.

The literature has provided overwhelming evidence that the interactions and environment of the home interplays with literacy learning (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006). Although variation in the literacy activities occurs at home, whether these activities are more traditional (such as visiting the library) or less traditional (such as talking during bath-time), the overlying importance is that children are learning from their social world around them, a notion articulated in this study's theoretical framework. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a higher quality home literacy environment included stimulating interactions between child and her/his world, or as Rogoff (2003) argued, the three planes of development. The more interactions the child has with stimulating media, adults, community events, print, and peers, the higher the quality of the home literacy

environment. An important caveat is that the interactions must be stimulating. That is, the information must be new to the learner in order for development to occur. Vygotsky (1978) expressed this well when he argued that a "more knowing other" is the catalyst for learning. Summarizing, a high quality home literacy environment provides stimulating opportunities for children to engage in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Saracho & Spodek, 2006; Wasik & Hindman , 2010).

Research Design

Because the survey contained qualitative and quantitative questions, the research design provided a more comprehensive analysis of the research, in this case a broader understanding of the impact of Partners in Print (Creswell, 2009). The primary data collection tool was a survey that included both quantitative and qualitative questions. In addition, the researcher analyzed program efforts toward parent empowerment and parent education by asking parents to review and then share their perceptions of the program's parent handouts on the post-test surveys. Parents rated the quality of the parent handouts relative to the goals of parent empowerment and parent education. The data were collected using a Likert scale and unstructured questions. Because the information was gained from different data points, this research project was considered a concurrent triangulation approach. The concurrent triangulation approach employed in this research was advantageous because it resulted in heavily-validated and substantiated findings (Creswell, 2009). Efforts to gain an understanding of Partners in Print from three different types of data provided the researcher with a complete picture of the phenomenon.

Methodology

Program Overview

Partners in Print is a parent involvement program for beginning readers (kindergarteners and first graders). The program manual's introduction clearly states the reason authors Julie Zrna, Anne Robinson, and Kim Falkenberg, experienced educators and literacy consultants, developed the program: "Recognizing the vital role parents play in children's literacy development, the authors developed *Partners in Print*—a parent-involvement program specifically designed to encourage the purposeful involvement of parents in children's literacy development" (Partners in Print, 2004, p.2). The program was developed and piloted in Mildura, Australia in 1990. Since its beginnings, award-nominated Partners in Print has been an overwhelming success and its use has spread across the world (Partners in Print, 2004).

Partners in Print at Kingsley Elementary began in 2008 and completed its fourth year of implementation in 2011. In the fall, parents and their children attended family literacy nights. The Partners in Print curriculum provides lessons, handouts, and activities for fifteen family literacy nights; but due to limited time and budget constraints, four family literacy nights were organized. During these workshops, children and parents rotated through stations learning or reviewing different literacy activities in each station (see Table 1 for a list of the workshop lessons that were implemented for this study). By evening's end, the goal was for parents to gain new strategies to foster their child's literacy. In 2010, Partners in Print evolved from an English only program to a Dual-Language program to accommodate a new Dual-Language program at the school

(Spanish and English). When they attended the family nights for this study, parents were asked in what language they preferred to be taught. According to Cross-Language Transfer theory, ideas learned in one language establish habits of practice that transfer to the second language (Cummins, 1980). Therefore parents should choose the language they are most comfortable with fostering at home. The importance of modeling appropriate language skills trumps which language the child is being taught at school (Atwill et al., 2010).

Every effort was made to invite all kindergarten and first grade families to attend Partners in Print family nights. Invitations and reminders were sent home with the children twice before each event. Also, posters were displayed throughout the school inviting families. The teachers and principals also included information regarding Partners in Print in home communication bulletins and newsletters. When families arrived the night of each event, they were asked to sign in so that attendance could be counted. The evening began with a brief introduction and an explanation of the night's agenda. All information was provided in both English and Spanish. When families signed in, they were asked for their language preference. Color coded tickets were used to divide the families into four groups: two Spanish speaking groups and two English speaking groups. Four stations were set up through which families rotated. At each station, a different mini-lesson was taught by a bilingual teacher so that by the end of the evening parents attended four mini-lessons. Because the teachers were bilingual and because the families were already divided by language preference, all mini-lessons were taught to families in their preferred language. Each mini-lesson was short, lasting only

15 minutes. The basic mini-lesson began with the teacher explaining the importance of the specific reading skill or strategy**.**

Next, the teacher modeled or demonstrated how parents could use a particular skill or behavior at home with their children. Then, the teacher encouraged parents to practice the newly learned skill immediately with their child. The station concluded with the distribution of parent handouts. Although each parent handout varied slightly, most of the parent handouts began with a brief summary of the lesson that explained the rationale behind each lesson. Then the parent handout listed procedures or extensions of how to engage in the literacy activity at home. These handouts provided a useful recap of the lesson. After the handouts were distributed, the families rotated to the next station. Once families rotated through all four stations, they were invited back to the cafeteria for refreshments and a free children's book, provided by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Examining one particular station, *How Print Works,* provides an illustration. The teacher began by explaining how written text has specific conventions that must be utilized. Examples of these conventions include that we read left to right, that pictures support the text, and that there are spaces between words. Next the teacher used a big book and the program poster to point out these concepts, and modeled how to ask questions about them to their children. Then, the parents were asked to choose a book and practice pointing out the concepts about print to their children. The teacher circulated around the room, providing encouragement and feedback. The session ended

with a discussion and a parent-friendly handout entitled *How Print Works*. The session ended and the parents and children rotated to another station (Partners in Print, 2004).

Research Population

Kingsley Elementary is an urban school within the Los Angeles metropolis. According to the Common Core of Data (CCD) from the National Center of Educational Statistics, in 2009-10 Kingsley had a total enrollment of 509 students. Serving a large population of minority and low income children with 5% Black or African American, 15% White, 10% Asian, and 70% Hispanic or Latino, Kingsley receives Title I school-wide funding because 73% of the students receive free or reducing lunch (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2010). Consulting the California Department of Education's 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 75% of Kingsley's white population performed at or above proficient level in English-Language Arts compared to only 56% of the Hispanic population performing at this level (California Department of Education, 2010). This unacceptable achievement gap provided the motivation for the researcher to coordinate the family literacy program, Partners in Print, at Kingsley Elementary School. The research population consisted of all the kindergarten and first grade parents who attended Partners in Print sessions and consented to participate in the study. There were 80 different families that attended the various Partners in Print family nights.

Sampling method. Parents who attended at least three Partners in Print family nights were invited to become the participants of this study. Because participation in the family nights was voluntary, convenience sampling was the sampling method used. Gay

et al. (2009) explained that convenience sampling is the process of including whoever voluntarily participates in the study. Although convenience sampling is not ideal, it is often used in educational research due to practicality and ethics. The researcher could not force attendance. Each participant signed a Consent Form (see Appendix A). Any effort to standardize attendance may have deterred families who had not attended an earlier session from attending a later session. Furthermore, mandated attendance sends the message to families that school events trump all other activities, a notion that directly conflicts with the theoretical framework of this dissertation study.

Sample size. There were approximately 188 kindergarten and first grade children. Fifty percent of these kindergarten and first grade children were enrolled in the Dual-Immersion, Spanish and English program. The other fifty percent of the children were enrolled in traditional English-only kindergarten. Of the 92 children enrolled in the Dual Language program, approximately 50% of them were dominant in Spanish and 50% were dominant in English. The dominant languages of the 96 children enrolled in traditional English-only classes varied. From the possible 188 families invited, 80 families, or 43% of the research population, participated in the family literacy nights. Of those 80 families, 32 families attended three or more family nights resulting in a sampling size of 32 (N=32). Of these 32 families, 15 were Spanish speaking and 17 were English speaking. Of the 32 parents included in the study, 27 were female and 5 were male. Ethnicities of the participants included 3% Black, 33% Caucasian, 7% Asian, 50% Latino, and 7% did not report an ethnicity.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in two phases. The first phase involved administering *The Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey* (PEHLES) to collect benchmark data. The second phase involved administering the PEHLES survey again for post-test collection. In addition to completing the PEHLES survey, two Likert-scale questions were added to the post-test survey that asked parents to rate the quality of the parent handouts in regards to their efficacy towards enriching and empowering the parents. The two questions specifically asked whether or not the parent handouts were a) educational for parents in their efforts to help their children and b) empowering for parents because they built their confidence and capability in helping their children.

Instrumentation. The PEHLES developed by the researcher was administered for data collection (see Appendix B). The PEHLES is a survey which includes both structured and unstructured items. This 13-item survey was specifically designed for the kindergarten and first grade parents at Kingsley Elementary. Because the population at Kingsley Elementary is predominantly Spanish speaking, the PEHLES was translated by a California credentialed teacher with a BCLAD (Bilingual Crosscultural Language in Academic Development) certification.

The first four questions of the survey were unstructured allowing for free-response. Including this qualitative portion, through the employment of unstructured question items, provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It also provided Spanish speaking parents a voice in a non-threatening manner. Kingsley Elementary serves a large Spanish speaking population. Using the unstructured format

allowed for more freedom for the participants and less intimidation which is often an unfortunate side-effect of using a translator at an interview. The unstructured questions were positioned first on the PEHLES, because one of the disadvantages of using unstructured question items is that often participants skip them or leave limited answers. By placing these questions first on the document, the participants recognized that they held great importance. The remaining nine question items were quantifiable and used a Likert scale for responses. Because this instrument was designed specifically for this study, no psychometric properties were initially available until after the data collection was completed. Once surveys were completed, though, the Cronbach's alpha for the Empowerment Subscale and Home Literacy Environment Subscale were 0.74 and 0.80. The PEHLES was divided into two subscales. In addition to these acceptable reliability coefficients, efforts were made to ensure that psychology and reading experts in the field noted face and content validity; a pilot survey was also given and feedback was elicited. Furthermore, the question items were heavily based on literature in the respective fields. Reiterating, the PEHLES seeks to collect information regarding two elements: parent empowerment and quality of the home literacy environment, thus there were two subscales as described below.

Parent empowerment subscale. The first subscale examined parent empowerment. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) identify six process components of empowerment:

- Individuals need to establish personally meaningful *goals*.
- Individuals need to take *action* towards the goals.

- Individuals need to observe and reflect on the *impact* their actions are making towards their goals.
- Individuals need to have a sense of *self-efficacy*, a belief that they are effective towards their goals.
- Individuals must have the *knowledge* of a course of action.
- Individuals must have actual *competence*, or a specific level of skill needed for task completion.

When designing the PEHLES, all six components of empowerment were addressed. Each question was initially created to address one empowerment component. However, further examination found that many of the questions addressed more than one component of empowerment. Table 3 illuminates the survey question construction and the components addressed (see also Appendix C).

Table 3

Parent Empowerment Survey Construction Process

Parent Empowerment Component	Survey Question
Personally Meaningful Goals	What are your reasons for participating in Partners in Print?[b]
Action Towards Goals	(Addressed through consulting attendance records).
Impact of Actions	I can make a difference in my child's learning.[a]
Self-Efficacy	What things do you do to help your child at home with literacy?[b]
Self-Efficacy	I am confident that I am able to help my child build literacy skills.[a]
Competence	I have the necessary skills to help my child with literacy at home.[a]
Knowledge	As a parent, what do you believe your role is in your child's education?[b]

[a]Likert Scale Responses of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
[b]Unstructured, free-response questions.

To address the components of personally meaningful goals, knowledge, and self-efficacy, the first three unstructured questions were included. To address the components of self-efficacy, competence, and impact, three quantifiable questions using a Likert scale were used to indicate the level of agreement. Parents chose their level of agreement along a five point scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). To address the component of action, attendance records were consulted, because attending the program reflected action towards a goal.

Quality of the home literacy environment subscale. The quality of the home literacy environment was also measured using the PEHLES. The Home Literacy Environment section is completely based on the *Parent Reading Survey* (PRS) developed by Koger and Shedd (2005). The PRS was developed to evaluate the quality of the home literacy environment. Based on the widely used *Stony Brook Family Reading Survey*, the PRS addresses the following parent-child literacy behaviors and interactions: incidence of active reading with child, demonstration of concepts about print, engagement in dialogic reading, teaching of the alphabetic principle and development of phonemic awareness (Whitehurst et al., 1994). Six Likert-scale questions measuring frequency of literacy actions from the PRS were used in the PEHLES. This survey reflected the myriad of ways different cultures and families practice literacy activities, recognizing that home literacy practices may not always look like traditional school practices or the book-in-lap routine that many educators prioritize. Activities such as singing or telling stories were recognized as a valuable literacy-building activity. For the Likert-scale questions, the answers were scored a 5 to 1 according to the frequency of the home literacy activity. As the quality of the home literacy environment increased, so did the score.

In addition to the six Likert scale questions, one unstructured question item was included: "List any materials that are in your home that help your child with reading and writing." This question had an important purpose. It provided insight into the availability of literacy materials at home. This question was originally a Likert-scale question from the PRS. However, to capture the wide variety of literacy materials, an

open-ended question expanded the pool of possible answers. Responses to this question provided a firsthand account of the home literacy environment, which is crucial to researching home literacy environments; although quantitative surveys can provide useful information, they cannot capture the entire story the way free-response questions can.

Survey administration. On the first evening of Partners in Print, families signed in with the researcher. When they signed in, the researcher highlighted their names on an attendance roster and asked them their language preference (Spanish or English). Then, consent forms (see Appendix A), and surveys were handed to each parent. Parents were asked to read over the information on the consent form which thoroughly explained the research project. As Gay et al. (2009) explained, "researchers obtain *informed consent* by making sure that research participants enter the research of their free will and with understanding of the nature of the study and any possible dangers that may arise as a result of participation" (p. 21). The consent form ensured that all parents were willing participants and understood the research study. Then parents were asked to complete the short pre-test survey *The Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey* (PEHLES). While parents were reading the survey, the accompanying children were given crayons and paper to entertain them while they waited for their parents to complete the survey. This sign-in and survey completion segment lasted roughly 20 minutes. Then introductions and a short presentation regarding the program were given. This bilingual presentation included a description of Partners in Print and an explanation of this current research project. All efforts were made to ensure that families understood the particulars of their participation. On all subsequent Partners in Print evenings, the same

procedures for signing in, obtaining informed consent, and completing the PEHLES were utilized.

Partners in Print took place across four evenings in the fall of 2011 and attendance was tracked for all four evenings. The attendance information was used for data analysis to determine which families could be included in the study for consistent participation (attending at least three family nights). For families that did not attend the first Partners in Print, and were interested in participating in the study, consent forms and pre-tests were given to them as they signed in on the second, third, and fourth family night (See Table 4). The researcher tracked attendance using class rosters. On the second, third, and fourth Partners in Print evenings, parents checked in with the researcher as they entered the cafeteria. The researcher was able to quickly locate parents' names to discover whether they had taken the pre-test, because all parents' names who had taken the pre-test were highlighted. (Please see next section for a discussion regarding confidentiality.) Because this study examined consistent participation, operationally defined as attending three or four sessions, not all pre-test surveys were analyzed.

Table 4

Data Collection Timeline

Date	Action
September 27, 2011	Consent Form and Pre-test Survey Administered
October 11, 2011	Consent Form and Pre-test Survey Administered
November 15, 2011	Future Post-test administration explained to participants
December 6, 2011	Post-test Administered
December 7, 2011	Data Analysis Process Initiated

Note. Consent Form and Pre-test Survey was only given to parents who had not previously attended a session.

On the final evening of Partners in Print, in late November, all participants were invited to participate in the post-test data collection and award ceremony to be held in December. To allow full effect of the treatment, the post-test survey was administered three weeks after the final family night which resulted in a two-month timeline for treatment. All families who had attended were invited to a celebration and evaluation ceremony. During this event, the post-test (which is almost identical to the pre-test) was given to all families who had consented to the study by signing the consent form and completing the pre-test survey. Post-test administration was almost identical to pre-test administration; families signed in and were given a post-test survey in the language of their choice (Spanish and English). The waiting children colored pictures while their parents completed the survey. Once all surveys were completed an award ceremony celebrating attendance and a special story-time performance began. At evening's end, the researcher was able to track the families that had not completed the post-test surveys. These families were called and asked to complete the survey. The surveys were sent

home sealed, with an enclosed envelope marked with the return address. Two surveys were mailed to families that were unable to be contacted through phone calls and face-to-face interactions.

Although it is common to request anonymity during research studies, this project would have been greatly hindered by requesting anonymity. Partners in Print was not a required event. Families freely chose to attend whichever events best fit their schedules. Kingsley Elementary has a diverse population with a variety of cultures and customs. If the researcher would have requested anonymity, it would have been extremely difficult to track attendance in an unobtrusive manner. Although practices such as color coding or providing nicknames are successful in some studies, it would not have worked in this school setting because the parents that attended were extremely busy and they were preoccupied with caring for their young children. Furthermore, prior to this research project the coordinators of Partners in Print had asked for informal parent evaluations each session. These informal evaluations provided parents with the optional choice to give their name. Almost without exception, parents at Kingsley Elementary had previously included their name. The reason for this is that the Partners in Print coordinators and families had established a trusting relationship at Kingsley Elementary. Parents knew that no harm would come to them by providing their names on the research study surveys. Moreover, every effort was made to keep all data confidential and secure under lock and key. To ensure confidentiality, when pre-tests were collected during the first, second, and third family night, the pre-tests were assigned a number at the bottom and back of the sheet of the sheet. The name of the participant and the number code were

recorded in a password-protected Excel spreadsheet. Then the parents' names were physically cut off from the surveys. The name strips that were cut off were stored under lock and key and the coded copies were used for data analysis. The same exact procedure was used to maintain confidentiality for the post-tests.

Document review by parents. In the second phase of data collection, using the post-test survey, a document review of the parent handouts was performed by the parents (Hatch, 2002). At each Partners in Print session, parents were given handouts that summarized the newly reviewed literacy skills and provided additional home activities. Because there were four family night events, and each event provided four mini-lessons, sixteen parent handouts were available for parents to review. To ensure that parents' perceptions of the parent handouts were understood, two Likert-scale questions were added to the post-test to gain this understanding. The following two added statements on the survey asked parents to rate their agreement to the following:

- Overall, the Partners in Print handouts taught me something new about how to help my child with reading and writing.
- Overall, the Partners in Print handouts helped me feel more capable and confident in helping my child with reading and writing.

These two survey questions were directly related to the two research questions guiding this study. The first question was added to determine how helpful the handouts were towards educating and enriching the home literacy environment. The home literacy environment is related to the home being able to help children with reading and writing. The second question aimed to discover the degree of empowerment parents gained from

utilizing the parent handouts, and thus asked parents if they felt more capable and confident.

Data Analysis

Due to the fact that the survey contained quantitative and qualitative components, two types of analyses were performed. The quantifiable data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The responses from the unstructured questions on the PEHLES were examined through typological analysis.

Data cleaning. To understand and describe the data meaningfully, descriptive techniques were employed. Once all data were collected, the first phase of analysis, according to Gay et al. (2009), was to convert the Likert responses to a numeric system. For the Empowerment Subscale, Question items 6, 7, and 8 responses indicated levels of agreement with strongly agree to strongly disagree being assigned the numeric values of 5 to 1 respectively. "No response" was not assigned a value. When parents marked two adjacent responses, the value was averaged. For example, when a parent marked agree and strongly agree, the value given was 4.5. For the Quality of the Home Literacy Environment Subscale, Question items 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 indicated levels of frequency with "5 or more times a week" being given the value of 5 to "once a month or less" being assigned the value of 1. When a response was not indicated for this section, no value was provided. The last question of the Quality of the Home Literacy Environment Subscale measured the number of books in the home. The highest range of book quantity was assigned a 5 and the lowest range of book quantity was assigned a 1. A non-response received no numeric value. Once all values were assigned to both subscales, the values

were inserted into an Excel spreadsheet and then uploaded into SPSS software. Demographic information, indicating gender and ethnicity, was inserted into the database also.

Descriptive statistics. The next step was to find descriptive statistics. The frequencies of males, females, attendance, parents, and ethnicities were tabulated. Then a measure of central tendency, the mean, was found for all survey questions. Also, the standard deviation of each mean score was examined. Gay et al. (2009) explained that the benefit of finding the standard deviation is its usefulness in comparing sets of scores. Two composite mean scores were also tabulated. The first three quantitative questions, item numbers 5, 6, and 7 were formed into the Empowerment Composite, by calculating the mean across these items. Then, the six quantitative questions related to the home literacy environment were also averaged to formed the Home Literacy Environment Composite. The entire descriptive statistics process was done twice, once for the pre-test and once for the post-test.

Additionally, the post-test included two new questions that inquired about the parent handouts. Descriptive techniques were employed to analyze these questions (items 14 and 15). Mean scores will be examined during analysis for comparison purposes.

Inferential statistics. To determine how likely it was that the results obtained from the sample population were different from the results obtained from the entire population, inferential statistics were employed (Gay et al., 2009). Using SSPS software, a mean composite score was found for both subscales on the pre-tests. These mean

scores were compared to the mean scores of the post-tests using a t-test for nonindependent samples. The t-test is a parametric test of significance used to compare the actual difference in scores. Without using a t-test, researchers would not be able to determine if the difference in scores solely occurred by chance. The t-test for nonindependent samples was used to compare one group's performance on a pre-test and post-test. Although it does not indicate the reason for a difference in scores on pre-tests and post-tests, a t-test tells researchers if the differences between the means are likely to have occurred due to chance (Gay et al., 2009). In addition to examining the values elicited in the t-test, a Cohen's *d* effect size measurement was utilized. Examining effect size allows researchers to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables. A Cohen's *d* value standardizes the effect size for easier evaluation (Grace-Martin, 2011).

Typological analysis. Hatch (2002) provided a useful model that was employed for analyzing the qualitative data from the unstructured question items: typological analysis. Typological analysis begins by dividing the data set into various categories generated from the information gained from reviewing the literature. To analyze the three unstructured parent empowerment questions and the one unstructured home literacy environment question, each question and set of responses was examined individually, but the steps for analysis were the same. The first step of the analysis of the unstructured questions was to identify typologies. For example, some of the typologies for the first free-response question, "What are the reasons you decided to participate in Partners in Print?" were "wanted to help my child" or "child asked me." Second, the data were read and color-coded based on the named typologies using an Excel spreadsheet (See Chapter

4 for a thorough description of all typologies). Third, the responses were reread by typology to pinpoint main ideas for each question. These main ideas were different for each question. The fourth step, as Hatch explained, was to find patterns, relationships, and themes so that data could then be reread and recoded to fit with the newly found patterns or themes. At this point, it was important to verify that the patterns identified were supported by the data and to search for non-examples so that reexamination and further analysis could occur. The next step was to find relationships among different identified patterns. This significant step enabled the researcher to "write [the] patterns as one-sentence generalizations" (Hatch, 2002, p. 158). Finally, selecting data excerpts for quotations and support concluded the typological analysis.

Conclusion

This research project employed survey research that contained qualitative and quantitative components. All participants were invited to participate in this one-group pre-test, post-test design. Quantitative survey items established composite scores that enabled comparisons, discovering the impact of consistent participation in Partners in Print. Qualitative survey items provided data and helped the researcher learn if the parents felt empowered and educated after participating in Partners in Print, which was the overarching goal of the program. The parents' perceptions of the parent handouts attempted to verify that the goals of the program were manifested in program handouts. Utilizing quantitative questions, qualitative questions, and a document review by parents, the researcher established a clear picture of the impact Partners in Print had on families.

This information was used to inform program coordinators so that future decisions regarding its implementation could be made.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the impact the family literacy program Partners in Print (2002) had toward the goals of enriching the home literacy environment (a key factor contributing to literacy achievement) and empowering parents to feel capable in helping with literacy development. This research project used a one-group pre-test, post-test design. First, the participating parents were given a pre-test survey that contained qualitative and quantitative questions. Next the families attended at least three family literacy nights. Then, after the family literacy program ended, the same families were tested again using the same qualitative and quantitative survey developed by the researcher, the *Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey*. This chapter, divided into six sections, presents the data gained from this survey research. The first two sections review the research questions and data collection methods. The third section shares the findings of Parent Empowerment, the first research question. The fourth section addresses the findings of the second research question, the Home Literacy Environment. The fifth section explains the document review by parents, and the final section summarizes all findings.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study which explored the impact of consistent participation. They were:

1. What impact does consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, have toward empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development?
2. What is the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families have consistently participated in Partners in Print, a school-based family literacy program?

For the purposes of this study, consistent participation was defined as attending three or four family literacy nights. Based on the literature review, two hypotheses emerged. First, it was hypothesized that parents who consistently attended Partners in Print would feel more empowered to help their child with literacy development. The treatment variable was the consistent participation in Partners in Print family nights. The dependent variable was the notion of empowerment. Second, it was hypothesized that families who had consistently participated in Partners in Print would report having a more enriched home literacy environment after attending Partners in Print. The dependent variable was the quality of the home literacy environment as reported on the surveys.

Data Collection

All data were collected in two phases. First, all participating families were given pre-test surveys when they began participating in the Partners in Print program. Second, post-tests were given at the award celebration event that occurred three weeks after the final Partners in Print session. A total of 32 families attended three or more family nights. Of those, 26 attended the award ceremony where post-tests were administered.

The other 6 families were contacted by phone and then sent the post-test surveys. Four of these families completed and returned the post-test, resulting in a total of 30 post-test surveys collected.

Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey

Developed by the researcher, *The Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey* (PEHLES) was administered to all parent participants (See Appendix B). The PEHLES is a survey which includes both Likert-scale questions and free-response items. The PEHLES was divided into two subscales. The first subscale examined parent empowerment by inquiring about the six process components of empowerment: goals, action, impact, self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence. (See Chapter 3, Table 3 and Appendix C for a thorough explanation of survey construction.) This subscale consisted of six total questions, three quantitative questions and three qualitative. To address the components of impact, self-efficacy, and competence, three Likert-scale questions were used establishing an empowerment composite to be used for future analysis. Participants rated their level of agreement, scored 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program was used to find reliability. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 was calculated, a value higher than the acceptable value of 0.75 meaning that the empowerment composite was internally consistent.

To address the components of goals, knowledge, and self-efficacy, three unstructured questions were included. The empowerment component of action was addressed by examining attendance records. Thirty-two families attended three or more

sessions. The fact that the parents attended the family nights reflected the empowerment component of action (see Table 3).

The second subscale, consisting of 7 questions, was the Home Literacy Environment subscale (see Chapter 3 for a thorough explanation). The first question was unstructured and required qualitative analysis. The remaining six questions, based strongly on previous home literacy surveys found in the literature, were combined to establish a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) composite to be used quantitatively for inferential statistics. The HLE composite reflected a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80, establishing internal reliability.

Research Question 1: Impact of Parent Empowerment

To answer the first research question regarding the impact of Partners in Print towards parent empowerment, both quantitative and qualitative data were found.

Quantitative Findings and Analysis

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program, the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the three empowerment questions examining self-efficacy, competence, and impact were found. A score of 5 reflected the highest degree of empowerment and the score of 1 reflected the lowest degree of empowerment. Examining Table 5, the first structured question regarding self-efficacy asked parents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "I am confident that I am able to help my child build literacy skills." The pre-test mean score of self-efficacy was 4.56 (.76) indicating that parents strongly agreed to this notion with little variance among one another. On the post-test, the mean score in self-efficacy was 4.72 (.46) indicating that

parents, again, strongly agreed to this idea of self-efficacy with little variance among one another.

Table 5

Parent Empowerment Structured Survey Items

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Survey Question (Component)	*n*	*M (SD)*	*n*	*M (SD)*
I am confident that I am able to help my child build literacy skills (Self-Efficacy).	32	4.56 (.76)	29	4.72 (.46)
I have the necessary skills to help my child with literacy at home (Competence).	32	4.50 (.57)	29	4.72 (.46)
I can make a difference in my child's learning (Impact).	31	4.71 (.46)	30	4.87(.35)
Empowerment Composite	32	4.58 (.52)	26	4.81 (.35)

Note. Cronbach's alpha of Empowerment Composite is 0.79

The second structured question was included to elicit notions of competence. Parents were asked their level of agreement with the statement, "I have the necessary skills to help my child with literacy at home." Viewing Table 5, it is evident that parents strongly agreed that they had the skills to help their children, with pre-test and post-test mean scores hovering close to "5." The mean scores of the pre-test and post-test were 4.50 (.57) and 4.72 (.46), respectively, indicating that parents strongly agreed to feeling competent. The third empowerment component examined quantitatively was impact, with parents rating their agreement to the statement "I can make a difference in my child's learning." Table 5 shows that on the pre-tests, parents strongly agreed that they

could make a difference with a mean score of 4.71 (.52). On the post-tests, with little variance, it is evident that parents strongly agreed again with a mean score of 4.87 (.35).

The three aforementioned components were combined to establish an empowerment composite. The mean score of the empowerment composite 4.58 (.52) on the pre-tests reflected that parents strongly agreed that they had self-efficacy, competence, and the ability to make an impact before participation in Partners in Print began. The mean of the empowerment composite on the post-tests was slightly higher at 4.81 (.35). The data showed that parents had a sense of self-efficacy, competence, and ability to impact both before and after participation in Partners in Print, a phenomenon referred to as the ceiling effect because the participants had limited room for improvement (Gay et al., 2009). Furthermore, the standard deviations of the three empowerment components and the empowerment composite were very low, indicating that there was limited variance in parents' level of agreement toward the empowerment components.

It was hypothesized that parents who consistently attended Partners in Print would feel more empowered to help their children with literacy development. To test this hypothesis, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, a mean composite score was found for both pre-tests and post-tests. Referring to Table 6, the mean score for the empowerment composite on the post-test was slightly higher than the mean score of the pre-test. To examine whether the change in mean scores was significant or due to chance, these mean scores were compared using a t-test for nonindependent samples. Results indicated that there was no technical significant

difference from pre-test to post-test on empowerment, t (25) = -1.94, p =.06, however the significance value is approaching significance. Thus, it is likely that participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor to the increase in mean scores. In addition to solely examining the values elicited in the t-test, a Cohen's *d* effect size measurement was utilized to examine the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The Cohen's *d* was -.35 indicating a very small effect. A larger sample size would be needed to test this study's hypothesis more thoroughly.

Table 6

Results of Paired Samples Statistics of Parent Empowerment

Subscale	*n*	*M (SD)*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Empowerment Pre-test	26	4.65 (.50)	-1.95	25	0.063
Empowerment Post-test	26	4.81 (.35)			

Therefore, according to this inferential analysis, it can be inferred that participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor to parents feeling more empowered to help their child with literacy development after the program. Examining the qualitative data provides a more comprehensive answer to the research question.

Qualitative Findings and Analysis

Three free-response questions were included in the survey. Each question aimed at accessing understanding of a different empowerment component. Typological analysis, the form of qualitative analysis used in this study, starts with the identification of typologies. Each free-response question elicited different typologies.

Goals. The first free-response question on the empowerment subscale was "What are your reasons for participating in Partners in Print?" This question was included to understand the goals parents had in relation to the literacy development of their child. Because parents were aware before beginning the program that the purpose of the program was to ultimately build literacy skills in children, discovering parents' specific goals for participation revealed whether or not parents were aiming to empower themselves. Table 7 illuminates the typologies established for this question.

Table 7

Typological Analysis of Goals Component for Parent Empowerment

Tier Level	Theme	Description	Typical Responses
1	Teach	Help my child with reading	Learn useful techniques to encourage reading at home. To learn how to teach my children to read.
1	Inform	Gain information	To learn new ideas to work with my kids. Learn how I can help her.
1	Promote	Promote a joy or love for reading	Encourage love of reading. Learn to make literacy more fun.
2	Involve	To participate in a school function	Son wanted to. Participate in school activities.
2	Interact	To interact with child	To do something together with my daughter after school.

Analysis of goals question. Once the original typologies were identified, these typologies were consolidated and organized into themes. Five major themes emerged.

The first three themes appeared to relate strongly with the notion of becoming more empowered to help children build literacy skills. These themes were: to teach my child, to gain information in order to help my child, and to promote my child's education. For example, one parent wrote on the pre-test that the reason he was participating was "to learn to help my child to become a proficient reader." Another parent wrote on the post-test that she participated "so [that] we [can] educate ourselves so that we can educate our children." Although there was great variance in responses, most parents' reasons for participating fell under these themes of promoting literacy development; thus because these reasons mirrored the aims of the Partners in Print program, they were considered Tier 1 reasons.

The remaining two themes that emerged as reasons for participating were not necessarily geared toward promoting literacy development. These themes were: to be involved in the child's life and to interact with the child. For example, one parent wrote that they came because "my daughter wanted to." Another parent explained that she came "to do something together with my daughter after school." Because these two themes were considered less important in comparison to the more apparent reason of building literacy, these themes were labeled as Tier 2 reasons.

Because this study was comparing parents' responses before and after participating in Partners in Print, efforts were made to compare the two sets of qualitative data. The data on the pre-tests and post-test reflected that the goals for attending were primarily Tier 1 reasons. However, the pre-tests generally were vague and less specific about promoting literacy. Parents explained that they wanted to promote their child's

education, but did not mention literacy as much. Furthermore, when each participant's answers were analyzed individually, eleven parents changed their reasons from Tier 2 reasons to Tier 1 reasons. It can be inferred that Partners in Print taught parents that they can have a more active role in building literacy skills, which is an empowering notion.

Knowledge. The second free-response question on the empowerment subscale was "As a parent, what do you believe your role is in your child's education?" This question was included to understand if parents had the empowerment component of knowledge. Did parents *know* that they were vital in relation to the literacy development of their child? Table 8 clarifies the typological analysis process used for this question.

Table 8

Typological Analysis of Knowledge Component for Parent Empowerment

Tier Level	Category	Description	Typical Responses
1	Teacher	Role was to teach child.	I am his first teacher. My child's education is my responsibility.
2	Support	Role was to support education.	Encourage homework. Communication with teachers.
3	Raise	Role was to rear child.	Help them be better Give him experience.
4	Partner	Role was to build relationship with child.	Share. To be an active participant.
5	Non-answer	No role provided.	Important. It's very important.

Analysis of knowledge question. The aforementioned typologies were consolidated and ranked again into tier levels. Tier 1, labeled "teacher," included typologies that were categorized as parents recognizing their role as teachers of their children. This role indicated that parents had the knowledge, a component of empowerment, that they were integral in their children's learning. One parent whose response was categorized as Tier 1 said that her role was to "try to be a teacher to help my child improve." Tier 2, labeled "supporter" included typologies that supported education but in a more passive manner. For example, one parent said that her role was to "help with homework." Tier 1 and Tier 2 responses were the most numerous in both the pre-test and post-test. Tiers 3, 4, and 5 responses were meager in comparison. Tier 3, labeled "Raiser" included typologies that were considered typical to child rearing such as guiding and protecting the child. One father considered his role as a "shepherd (sic)." Tier 4, labeled "partner" included notions of participating alongside the child as this parent stated, "to be an active participant in child's life." The last level, Tier 5, included responses that didn't directly answer the question. Some parents explained that their role was "very important."

This study compared parents' responses before and after participating in Partners in Print. Comparing pre-test responses to post-test responses, the pre-test responses showed that generally parents saw their role in the child's education equally as helping by teaching and by supporting what was happening at school. Post-test trends revealed that parents found their role in their child's education predominantly to be their first teacher. This seemed significant due to the treatment's focus and it can be inferred that Partners in

Print was integral in influencing parents to reconsider their role in their child's education from the lower ranking Tier 2 category to the highest ranking Tier 1.

Self-efficacy. The third free-response question on the empowerment subscale was "What things do you do to help your child at home with literacy?" This question was included to understand if parents believed that they had the ability to help their children, the empowerment component of self-efficacy. Table 9 identifies typologies used.

Table 9

Typological Analysis of Self-Efficacy Component for Parent Empowerment

Tier Level	Category	Description	Typical Responses
1	Active	Parents actively or directly involved in activities	We read books every night before we go to bed. I teach her words and sentences.
2	Passive	Parents indirectly supported literacy	Encourage him to read by himself. Provide materials.
3	Outsource	Parents took themselves out of the process of literacy development	Watch PBS and the news. Computer.

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Analysis of self-efficacy question. To understand if parents had a sense of self-efficacy, a belief that they were effective toward their goals of promoting their children's literacy development, the typologies were categorized and ranked into three tiers. The most common responses fell under Tier 1, labeled "active." This optimum level indicated a high level of self-efficacy because the strategies parents employed were active, directly involving the parent. Examples from the aforementioned typologies

included strategies such as "read with child" or "provided instruction with words." Parents falling in the Tier 1 category answered the question with responses such as "I make flashcards to teach them words" or "we read books every night before we go to bed." Parents who used more passive strategies provided responses that were categorized in Tier 2, labeled "passive." The strategies parents used promoted literacy, but did not place the parent as central to literacy development. For example, one parent responded that she "get him the book he like (sic)." Tier 2 responses were sparse. The third tier responses were labeled "outsource" because the parent took himself out of the process of literacy development and replaced himself with something or someone else. Typical responses from Tier 3 include "educational television" and/or "computer."

Because this study compared parents' responses before and after participating in Partners in Print, pre-test responses and post-test responses were compared. The pre-tests and post-tests responses were similar in two ways. First, they both showed that generally most families actively helped their children build literacy skills. Second, results indicated that very few families took a passive role in helping their child. There was, however, one significant difference between pre-tests and post-tests. There was a greater amount of "outsource" responses on the pre-test. In fact, no parent mentioned "outsource" responses as a literacy development strategy on the post-tests. The self-efficacy component of empowerment states that parents must believe that they have the ability to help their children. The fact that after participation in Partners in Print, no parents reported relying on others to help their children suggested that the program did indeed empower parents.

Summary of Findings

To make sense of both the quantitative and qualitative data on parent empowerment, examining the data set as a whole was imperative. Table 10 illuminates the process of analysis.

Table 10

Summary of Results for Parent Empowerment

Component	Empowerment Found	Evidence
Goals	Yes	Change in qualitative responses
Action	Yes	Attendance at Partners in Print
Impact	Likely	*p* value approached significance
Self-Efficacy (Qualitative)	Yes	Change in qualitative responses
Self-Efficacy (Quantitative)	Likely	*p* value approached significance
Competence	Likely	*p* value approached significance
Knowledge	Yes	Change in qualitative responses
Combination of components from document review by parents	Yes	Mean score of 4.32 (1.09)

The first research question asked for the impact consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, had towards empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development. Quantitative data reflected that parents' level of empowerment did increase by the end of the program. Inferential statistics indicated that participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor to parent empowerment. Examining the qualitative evidence led to the notion that all three sets of responses from the three unstructured questions suggested growth toward empowerment. The results seemed unconvincing until examined comprehensively

according to the original definition of empowerment, which consisted of the six process components. Four of the six tested components of empowerment suggested that progress was definitely made towards building that component. The qualitative data suggested that parents' notions of goals, knowledge, and self-efficacy grew as a result of participation. The component of action was addressed by descriptive statistics in the form of attendance. The mere fact that parents attended the program showed that they were taking action towards their goals, which were overwhelmingly to help promote their child's education. The only components that did not absolutely reflect growth were the components of impact and competence, yet the significance values suggested that Partners in Print was still a contributing factor. Reasons for this are discussed in the next chapter, but when viewing the data as a whole there appeared to be evidence to suggest that Partners in Print did indeed empower families.

Research Question 2: Impact of the Home Literacy Environment

To answer the second research question regarding what the impact was on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families had consistently participated in Partners in Print, both quantitative and qualitative data were used.

Quantitative Findings and Analysis

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program, the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the six home literacy environment (HLE) questions were found. A score of 5 reflected the highest quality of the HLE and a score of 1 reflected the lowest quality of the HLE. Examining Table 11, parents were first

asked to determine the frequency of the literacy interaction of reading to their children in the question, "How often do you read to your child?" The pre-test mean score was 4.62 (.56) and the post-test mean score was 4.79 (.42). Both scores reflected the frequency of "5 or more times a week," the highest frequency available on the survey (also see Appendix B). Most parents claimed that they read with their children almost daily. Second, parents were also asked to determine the frequency of the literacy interaction of talking about books in the question, "How often do you talk about a book with your child?" The pre-test score reflected that parents talked to their children about books two to three times a week, with a mean score of 4.31(.74). The post-test score reflected that parents talked to their children about books five or more times a week, with a mean score of 4.54(.51). Results on the third question, "How often do you help your child learn the sounds and names of the alphabet letters?" led to an interesting discussion. On the pre-test, parents reported that they explored the alphabet with their children about two to three times a week, reflecting a mean score of 4.03 (1.08). On the post-test, parents reported that they explored the alphabet more frequently, reflecting a mean score of 4.63 (.69). However the standard deviation values on the pre-tests reflected that parent responses showed some variance. It was suspected that this variance was due to the actual reading levels of the children. Similar conclusions could be made about the practice of developing phonemic awareness, the fourth question. On the pre-test, parents reported that they sang songs, played rhyming games, or said nursery rhymes with their children about two to three times a week, with a mean score of 3.97 (1.08). On the post-test, parents again reported that they sang songs, played rhyming games, or said nursery

rhymes with their children about two to three times a week, reflecting a mean score of 4.19 (1.04). Results showed that there was some variance in the responses, suggesting that the varied levels of the children dictated the frequency of some of the literacy activities reflected in the survey. Regardless, the pre-test and post-test scores did not especially change. For the fifth question, parents were asked "how often do you help your child write letters or words such as the names of family and friends" to gain a better picture of writing interactions. The mean scores between the pre-test and post-test did not vary notably with mean scores of 3.78 (1.10) and 4.18 (.91), respectively. The final structured question was "If you counted today, how many children's books (includes library books) do you have in your home for your child." Parents reported on both the pre-test and post-test, with limited variance, that they have 40 or more books in their home for their children with a pre-test mean score of 4.50 (.88) and a post-test mean score of 4.61 (.74).

The six structured questions combined established the home literacy environment (HLE) composite. Examining Table 11, the mean of the HLE composite 4.19 (.67) on the pre-tests reflected that the home literacy environments of families before they began Partners in Print were of high quality, but with room for improvement. The mean of the HLE composite on the post-tests was slightly higher at 4.46 (.40) indicating that the quality of the HLE increased. Examining the standard deviations of the HLE composite mean scores of the pre-test and post-test, reflected little variance among answers. However, when examining the standard deviations of each HLE strategy individually,

some strategies had greater variance in responses. Reasons for this are discussed in the next chapter.

Table 11

Home Literacy Environment Structured Survey Items

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Survey Question (Actions)	*n*	*M (SD)*	*n*	*M (SD)*
How often do you read to your child (Read to Child)?	29	4.62 (.56)	28	4.79 (.42)
How often do you talk about a book with your child (Talk About Books)?	32	4.31 (.74)	28	4.54 (.51)
How often do you help your child learn the sounds and names of the alphabet letters (Alphabet)?	31	4.03 (1.08)	27	4.63 (.69)
How often do you sing songs, play rhyming games or say nursery rhymes with your child (Phonemic Awareness)?	31	3.97 (1.08)	27	4.19 (1.04)
How often do you help your child write letters or words such as the names of family and friends (Writing)?	32	3.78 (1.10)	28	4.18 (.91)
If you counted today, how many children's books (includes library books) do you have in your home for your child (Number of Books)?	32	4.50 (.88)	28	4.61 (.74)
Home Literacy Environment Composite	32	4.19 (.67)	24	4.46 (.40)

Note. Cronbach's alpha of Home Literacy Environment Composite is 0.80

It was hypothesized that families who have consistently participated in Partners in Print would report having a more enriched home literacy environment after attending Partners in Print. To test this hypothesis, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, a mean composite score was found for both pre-tests and post-

tests. Referring to Table 12, the mean score for the HLE on the post-test was slightly higher. To examine whether the change in mean scores was significant or due to chance, these mean scores were compared using a t-test for nonindependent samples, a common correlation statistical analysis. The two mean scores were found not to be significantly different, t (23) = -2.06, p =.051. Thus, although the mean scores increased in the post-test, they did not do so beyond what would be expected by chance. However, the significance value is rather close to the acceptable value, indicating that although not technically significant, it was likely that the treatment may have influenced post-test results. In addition to only examining the values elicited in the t-test, a Cohen's *d* effect size measurement was utilized to examine the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The Cohen's *d* was -.34 indicating a very small effect. A larger sample size could help test this study's hypothesis more thoroughly.

Table 12

Results of Paired Samples Statistics of Home Literacy Environment

Subscale	*n*	*M (SD)*	*t*	*df*	*p*
HLE Pre-test	24	4.29 (.60)	-2.06	23	0.051
HLE Post-test	24	4.46 (.40)			

Therefore, according to this inferential analysis, it can be inferred that participation in Partners in Print is a contributing factor to establishing a more enriched home literacy environment.

Qualitative Findings and Analysis

One free-response question on the home literacy subscale sought to gain a better understanding of the home literacy environments of the participants. The question asked parents to "list any materials that are in your home that help your child with reading and writing." The purpose of this question was to discover the availability of literacy materials at home. Because the literature reinforced a broad view of literacy, the open-ended question also allowed parents to share literacy supplies were not traditionally recognized as literacy materials. Typological Analysis was used to identify the types of materials families used. These typologies included:

- Alphabet
- Technology (e.g. computers, iPads, and cellular phones)
- Books
- Writing and drawing materials
- Workbooks
- Arts and crafts supplies
- Whiteboards and chalkboards
- Educational games
- Flashcards
- Posters
- CDs and music
- Study space and/or furniture
- Household materials

- Magazines and newspapers
- Educational videos and television
- Library cards

Comparing responses from the pre-tests and post-tests, one finding was that the most common materials used by parents were books and writing and drawing supplies. The second finding provided evidence of positive effects towards the home literacy environment, and suggested that Partners in Print could have influenced this change. The post-tests reflected more reports of a wider variety of literacy materials in the home including materials such as library cards, household materials (i.e. cereal boxes), and magazines and newspapers.

Summary of Findings

To explain the quantitative and qualitative data, Table 13 was developed.

Table 13

Summary of Results for Home Literacy Environment

Action	Enriched HLE	Evidence
Read to child	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Talk about books	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Alphabet	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Phonemic awareness	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Writing	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Number of books	Yes	*p* value indicates likeliness
Wide variety of resources	Yes	Change in qualitative responses
Combination of actions from document review by parents	Yes	Mean score of 4.29 (1.08)

Based on the quantitative data, no technical significant change was found in the home literacy environments of families before and after they participated in Partners in Print. However, the significance value was rather close to the acceptable value, indicating that although not technically significant, it was likely that the Partners in Print participation may have influenced parents to report having a more enriched home literacy environment. Furthermore, responses from the one unstructured question on the home literacy environment subscale suggested that participation in Partners in Print may have influenced families to provide a greater variety of traditional and non-traditional literacy materials at home.

Document Review by Parents

This research project studied the impact of Partners in Print through examining the perceptions parents reported in a survey. To gain another data point, the post-test survey asked parents to report the efficacy of the parent handouts; thus parents essentially performed a document review. At each Partners in Print session, parents were given program handouts that reinforced the mini-lessons taught. There were four family nights, and at each family night, four handouts were distributed. This means that parents were given 12-16 handouts depending on whether they attended three or four family nights. Parents were asked to review these documents and then provide their perceptions of these handouts. On the post-test, two Likert-scale questions were added to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions. The value 5 reflected strongly agree, 4 reflected agree, 3 reflected neither agree nor disagree, 2 reflected disagree, and 1 reflected strongly disagree. To discover whether the handouts were empowering, parents were asked to

indicate their level of agreement from strongly agree to strongly disagree on the following statement: "Overall, the Partners in Print handouts helped me feel more capable and confident in helping my child with reading and writing." These responses were entered into the software program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Values were designated for each level of agreement. The mean score for this question was 4.32 (1.09) indicating that parents agreed that they felt empowered by the program handouts.

To discover whether the handouts enriched the home literacy environment, parents were asked to indicate their level of agreement from strongly agree to strongly disagree on the following statement: "Overall, the Partners in Print handouts taught me something new about how to help my child with reading and writing." These responses were entered into the software program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Values were designated for each level of agreement. The mean score for this question was 4.29 (1.08) indicating that parents agreed that the handouts helped them provide a more enriching home literacy environment.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of Partners in Print, a family literacy program that had been coordinated at the research site for the previous four years. The researcher hypothesized that the effects of Partners in Print greatly impacted families, empowering them to feel more capable and confident to help their children build literacy skills, and encouraging them to create more enriching home literacy environments. In regard to empowerment, parents' perceptions indicated that

they did indeed feel more empowered after consistently participating in Partners in Print, a program goal and a motivation for coordinating the event in the first place. This was evidenced by survey questions, parent attendance and the document review by parents. In regard to the impact Partners in Print had toward encouraging families to enrich their home literacy environments, there was evidence that the home literacy environment was of higher quality after participation, based on the question responses and the document review by parents. The key finding was that participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor to increased parent empowerment and more enriched home literacy environments. Discussion of these summary findings is provided in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This research project was developed to examine the impact of Partners in Print, an ongoing family literacy program at Kingsley Elementary. Beginning in 2008, Partners in Print was brought to Kingsley Elementary to educate and empower families so they could foster early literacy development at home. This notion of fostering literacy development at home, widely known as the home literacy environment, is the motivation behind designing and implementing most family literacy programs. The education field recognizes that the demands of literacy development call for help from home. Partners in Print was implemented to assist parents, but whether or not it was successful at Kingsley had not been formally determined. Thus, this research project aimed to assess the efficacy of the program's goals by asking the following two research questions:

1. What impact does consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, have toward empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development?
2. What is the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families have consistently participated in Partners in Print, a school-based family literacy program?

Reiterating, at Kingsley Elementary, did Partners in Print empower parents and enrich their home literacy environments to help build literacy skills at home with their children?

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings. Then, implications of the study are discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with recommendations for schools and policymakers and then recommendations for future research.

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

Parents that attended three or four Partners in Print family nights (consistent participation) were invited to participate in this study. Before participation in the program, pre-test surveys were given to all participants. At program's end, post-test surveys were given to the participants. The pre-test and post-test survey, the Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES), were identical and asked questions eliciting parents' perceptions in regards to parent empowerment and home literacy environments (see Chapter 3). On the post-test, two additional questions were included, asking parents to rate the effectiveness of the program handouts, essentially asking parents to perform a document review. Thirty-two families participated in the research. Results and analysis of the study follow.

Research Question 1: Parent Empowerment

The first research question examined the impact of consistent participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, toward empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development. Results suggested that participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor in empowering parents in their efforts to foster literacy development with their children. The empowerment process defined by Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) included six empowerment components: goals, self-efficacy, knowledge, competence, action and impact. To discover growth in

empowerment, all components were addressed on the Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES). The Empowerment Process Model, proposed by Cattaneo and Chapman (2010), begins with the articulation of meaningful and power-oriented goals. On the PEHLES parents articulated goals such as "to learn to help my child to become a proficient reader" and "I hoped to learn tools available to assist my child in learning to read." The next process component was that actions were carried out towards stated goals. The action parents took in this research study was attending the family literacy nights. The third part of the process was for individuals to observe and reflect on the impact of their actions and goals. The data in this study suggested that parents strongly agreed that they could make a difference in their children's learning.

As parents went through this empowerment process, they drew on their self-efficacy, competence, and knowledge. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) explained self-efficacy as the belief in one's own abilities. On the survey, parents reflected strong agreement in their belief that they had the tools and skills to help their children. Comments such as "I help him practice his words" and "we read to him every night about 15-20 minutes" indicated that parents feel capable in helping their children. The next component parents drew on was their competence. Competence is defined as the actual level of skills relevant to a goal. The data reflected that parents strongly agreed that they had the skills to help their children with literacy. The final process component parents drew on was their knowledge. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) explained that the knowledge component was an understanding of the paths toward goal attainment. So if the parents' goal was to foster literacy development in their child, then they must

understand that the pathway to do so involved them taking on the role as facilitator or teacher. Responses on the survey such as "it's our responsibility to teach them everything in our hands" and "well I believe I need to be a teacher at home" indicated that parents did reflect the knowledge component.

Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) provided the definition of the process of empowerment that guided this study. They emphasized that the empowerment components interact with one another reiteratively and within the social context of a person's life. Thus, although the components have been separated to gain perspective, the entire empowerment process model must ultimately be viewed as a whole. With this lens in mind and informed by the data, it can be inferred that parents participated in Partners in Print because they had the goal of helping their child build literacy. The strategies gained from the program contributed to their sense of self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence, which led to the desired impact of actually helping their children build literacy skills at home.

It is speculated that participation in Partners in Print contributed to parent empowerment because the lessons in Partners in Print built up the parents' knowledge levels, actual skills (competence), and their sense of self-efficacy. Once parents explored the impact their participation in Partners in Print was having, their knowledge, self-efficacy, and competence continued to increase in a cyclical manner. In essence, their earlier notions of empowerment contributed to more empowerment.

Research Question 2: Home Literacy Environment

The second research question explored the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families had consistently participated in Partners in Print. To gain this insight, the Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES) examined the following parent-child literacy actions: reading to child, talking about books, exploring the alphabet, developing phonemic awareness, encouraging writing, and supplying literacy resources in the home. These questions were combined to create a Home Literacy Environment (HLE) composite. Findings indicated it is likely that participation in Partners in Print had enriched the home literacy environments of families. Participation in Partners in Print contributed to the increase of the literacy actions of reading to the child, talking about books, exploring the alphabet, developing phonemic awareness, encouraging writing, and supplying a wide variety of literacy resources in the home.

This increase in literacy behaviors is most likely due to the learning gained from Partners in Print. Reviewing Table 2, the Partners in Print workshops taught and facilitated the six literacy actions measured in the research survey. For example, the Partners in Print workshop "Good Books" taught families about award-winning children's books, encouraging families to read and discuss good books together and to visit the library or local bookstore to supplement the home library. This one workshop encouraged at least three literacy actions: reading to child, talking about books, and supplying a wide variety of resources in the home. Another Partners in Print workshop entitled "Being a Word Solver" encouraged using the alphabet, reading to the child,

writing, and talking about books. Each Partners in Print workshop addressed early literacy skills and literacy instructional practices. The strategies gained at these events most likely changed the home literacy environment for the better.

Implications of the Study

The data from this project suggested that the family literacy program Partners in Print should continue its implementation as a means for empowering parents and enriching the home literacy environment, which are both linked to student achievement. Kindergarten and first grade parents reported that they felt more empowered and educated after participating in this program. Based on the theoretical framework which emphasizes the notion that an individual's social environment is integral to his or her learning, parents are essential to their children's learning. Therefore, if Kingsley is devoted to empowering families to foster literacy development, Partners in Print should continue to be used as a tool to do so. Participation in Partners in Print was a contributing factor towards parent empowerment and an enriched home literacy environment. As Henderson and Mapp (2002) stated, parents have a major influence on their children's achievement. Therefore, empowering parents may eventually contribute to student achievement. In addition many studies have linked the home literacy environment to future literacy achievement (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006). Therefore, efforts towards enriching the home literacy environment may contribute to eventual literacy achievement. Because parent empowerment and enriched home literacy environments may benefit families, Partners in Print, or an age-appropriate family literacy program, could be extended to the older

elementary students at Kingsley as well. Literacy development is ongoing, and programs should be in place to help all elementary parents become empowered and educated. Furthermore, Kingsley is one elementary school in the district. Partners in Print could be implemented at all of the elementary schools in the district so that the entire community receives the benefits that participation in Partners in Print has contributed. Following Rogoff's (2003) Transformation of Development as Participation theory, enriching the community in this manner, will serve to eventually enrich the individual because his learning is influenced by the community.

A Broader View of the Student

The foundation of this research study is Rogoff's (2003) Transformation of Development as Participation theory: individuals learn from their social environment, or the interactions with the influences of the self, others, and the community. Because individuals learn in this manner, viewing the student more broadly may benefit schools. If educators recognize the student's family and community as part of the student, more learning may be stimulated. Often, schools tend to view the student as separate from her social environment (Auerbach, 1989). Disregarding the social environment may leave a vast resource for learning untapped. Instead, schools may benefit by searching for ways to enrich the child's social environment as well. The literature is clear that children who come from strong home literacy environments find more success in school (Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2005; Weigel et al., 2006). Educators may benefit from considering the students' families and the community as resources and partners in the mission to educate youth (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Schools that

become wider in scope, havens for community and health programs that support families, may eventually find more student success because of the idea articulated by this study's theoretical framework: the individual's social environment including his personal, interpersonal and community influences is integral to his learning. Programs placed at schools to help with adult literacy, mental health, parenting issues, and economic hardship may contribute to creating a more enriching environment for the learner which may lead to greater academic outcomes.

This idea is not new; federally funded Title I schools are mandated to educate parents (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Many pre-school programs such as Even Start and Head Start require interventions that support families more comprehensively (Padak et al., 2002). More districts would benefit from implementing empowering programs like Partners in Print, as a strategy for helping students by helping parents. Strapped for funding, districts often overlook family literacy programs. Yet current research still claims that the best determinant of a child's academic success is the parent's literacy skills (National Institutes of Health, 2010). Perhaps the model for education needs to change from one that focuses solely on the student to one that focuses on the student and his social context (which includes his parents).

This can be accomplished by changing educational policy to institute family literacy programs as part of the core function of schooling. Regulations exist that encourage parent involvement, but the funding is slight and parent involvement programs may be overlooked (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Policy is needed to build capacity at the school-site level. The presence of family at schools should become part of

the school culture, instead of the current practice where most families just come to school performances and parent-teacher conferences. If education policy mandated parent-teacher facilitators at each school, these personnel could focus on new strategies to bring reluctant parents on board. Currently, teachers and administrators are overwhelmed with daily work demands, leaving them with limited capacity to reach out to the parent community. However, if there were a designated teacher on site whose primary goal was to implement parent involvement programs, including family literacy programs, the task of empowering parents could be accomplished. Parent empowerment is a contributing factor for promoting success for children, and policymakers should create funded plans that elicit it (Henderson and Mapp, 2002).

Recommendations to Schools

Literature from the field and data gained from this research study validate the notion that family literacy programs, like Partners in Print, may be a useful strategy for schools. To ensure the success of a family literacy program, the following three recommendations need to be considered.

First, coordinators of family literacy programs need to consider their population and school culture when choosing or designing a family literacy program. This notion of considering the school population and culture, and respecting it, is corroborated by family literacy scholars, Auerbach (1995) and Rodríguez-Brown (2009). Furthermore, as Phillips et al. (2006) and Nickse (1990) explained, there are a variety of models of family literacy programs available. Schools need to ensure that the chosen family literacy program fits their school. For example, schools such as Kingsley Elementary need to

consider the primary languages of the students and their families. Cummins (1980), Atwill et al. (2010), and Yazici et al. (2010) have articulated the importance strong primary language skills have on second language acquisition. It would not be appropriate or helpful to teach families in English if their primary language is Spanish. Also, careful consideration should be made when reviewing the curriculum covered by family literacy programs. Aligning all school programs to the academic standards is the optimum practice. Additionally, as Phillips et al. (2006) explained, some family literacy programs greatly involve children (child-centered models) and others do not (adult education models). Coordinators need to consider issues of child-care and the needs of the children involved. Following that notion is the consideration of the logistics such as the timing, pacing, quantity and location of family literacy programs. These factors will influence the success of the programs. Summarizing, coordinators need to know who they are serving.

The second recommendation for schools is to designate and fund personnel to organize and implement the program, a task too overwhelming for teachers or administrators who already have a full schedule. In this current research study, the researcher, a full-time classroom teacher, learned firsthand about the amount of time, energy, and resources required to facilitate the family literacy program. Balancing full-time teaching with coordinating Partners in Print was extremely difficult, and it lead to diminished teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Because of the workload involved, no teacher has the capacity maximize effectiveness at both jobs simultaneously. Delegating the task of coordinating a family literacy program to classroom teachers or

administrators is an unsustainable model in the long term. However, if there were a designated teacher on site whose primary goal was to implement parent involvement programs, including family literacy programs, the task of empowering parents could be accomplished.

A third recommendation is for educators at schools to become advocates for family literacy. Educators need to share with the community and society at the large the message Rodríguez-Brown (2009) offered: the supportive home environment that facilitates the exploration and practice of literacy, promotes literacy development. Furthermore, the community needs to hear from educators that families are wanted, valued, and needed to facilitate the all-encompassing process of literacy development. As Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006) shared in their chronological review of the history of family literacy, up until the mid-nineteen hundreds, parents were encouraged to leave the learning to the schools. However, the research continues to refute this notion (Henderson and Mapp (2002) and active, involved parenting defined by Epstein (2001) is imperative for successful outcomes for children and schools.

Recommendations to Policymakers

This research suggested three recommendations to policy makers. First, policymakers need to create mandates that specifically fund family literacy programs in public schools. Regulations and funding exist to promote parent education through Title I mandate; however, the requirements and funding are not enough to aid in making family literacy a higher priority in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Due to limited funding, grants are used to bring family literacy programs to schools, a strategy

used to fund the family literacy program for this dissertation. Although grants are a welcomed supplement, adequate budgetary funding should be in place to bring family literacy programs to all schools. Second, policy should be written that mandates and funds parent-teacher coordinators to be placed at all schools. As mentioned earlier, these coordinators are needed to carry the important workload of facilitating true school and family partnerships. In addition to funding family literacy programs and parent-teacher facilitators, the third recommendation is for policymakers to give control of this proposed funding to the local school district. Auerbach (1995) and Rodríguez-Brown (2009) argued for matching family literacy programs to the population and demographics of the school. The implication of their argument is that schools should have localized control. No one-size-fits-all strategy will meet the diverse challenges of each unique school. For this reason, districts need to be authorized to utilize funds in a manner that best fits their schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this research provided positive results validating the use of Partners in Print, several recommendations may contribute to the research in the future. Recommendations to enhance the current methodology and recommendations to further the research are provided.

Methodological Enhancements

First, two elements of the research design could be enhanced in the future: sampling and instrumentation. This current study investigated the perceptions of participating parents who attended Partners in Print. The convenience sampling method

was useful, but caused some threats to internal validity. The participants chosen for this study were the parents who already wanted to attend Partners in Print (and become empowered), resulting in the differential selection of participants. The participants were most likely parents who already recognized the importance of being involved in their child's literacy development. The differential selection most likely influenced a ceiling effect with many of the data points. Because parents scored themselves so highly on the pre-tests, they left themselves little room for growth to be indicated on the post-tests. In the future, it could be more enlightening to include a more diverse group of parents. Improving the sampling method would enhance the research and could possibly assist in increasing the number of participants. A higher number of participants may have yielded more robust data.

In addition to enhancing the sampling method, future studies should consider using a revised version of the Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES). One minor oversight could be easily remedied, namely the frequency choices for the home literacy actions. The frequency choice jumped from "2-3 times a week" to "5 or more times a week." The researcher should have provided the option of four times a week as well. More extensive revision is needed to improve data gained, such as lengthening the survey so that more Likert-scale statements regarding parent empowerment could be provided. The empowerment definition used in this study considered six components of empowerment; however only three components were acknowledged on the empowerment composite. The survey would provide more robust data if all six components were considered quantitatively and qualitatively. The reason

the survey was succinct in the first place was to make it easier for parents of young children to complete while their children were next to them coloring. Hindsight suggested that perhaps the manner of data collection could have been changed so that children were not with their parents while the surveys were completed. This would have allowed for a more extensive survey that could have provided richer data.

Future Research

The following suggestions for future research aim to provide powerful data regarding exploration of the impact of Partners in Print:

- The designers of Partners in Print should conduct a full scale research study to provide more information to their customers. It would benefit the designers and their customers to provide a clearer profile of the program so that schools can ensure that Partners in Print is a good fit to the demographics and needs of the schools.
- Establish a pre-test, post-test control design. This research design involves surveying participants and non-participants before and after implementing Partners in Print. Comparing groups may widen the understanding of the effects of Partners in Print (Gay et al., 2009).
- Utilize a panel survey design. Because a panel survey studies the same individuals over time, educators can learn the residual effects of the family literacy program.
- Replicate this study to additional school sites utilizing Partners in Print so that the results of the study can be more generalizable.

- Extend the amount of treatment given to parents. This research study provided four family nights, largely a function of limited budget and time. However, the program offers curriculum for sixteen family nights. A longer time period may strengthen information gained.
- Interview parents to gain a deeper understanding of notions of empowerment and education.
- Investigate the home literacy environments of families using the funds of knowledge approach articulated by Moll et al. (2005). Moll et al. participated in home visits in efforts to learn about each family's particular set of strengths. The information gained would inform future curricular designs and build relationships between the family and the school.
- Investigate the effect Partners in Print has toward building the literacy skills of the child participants.

Summary

This research sought to discover the impact Partners in Print had at Kingsley Elementary. In its fourth year of implementation, it was necessary to find empirical data to support the utilization or elimination of this family literacy program. Partners in Print was brought to Kingsley in efforts to empower and educate parents on how to foster the literacy development of their children. After collecting data through survey research before and after consistent participation, it was found that Partners in Print did accomplish its goals of empowering and educating families. This new information adds

to the plethora of research that validates the practice of implementing family literacy programs as a tool for enriching the lives of the children and their families.

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

September 27, 2011

Dear Parent,

You are invited to participate in a research study about the family literacy program Partners in Print. You are being selected as a possible participant because you are attending Partners in Print. I, Rebecca Godbey, doctoral candidate in Loyola Marymount University's School of Education, ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

The study: The purpose of this study is to gain information on the impact of Partners in Print. I will explore whether the program goals are effective towards their promise of empowering and education parents. If you agree participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: complete the attached questionnaire, attend at least three Partners in Print family literacy nights, and complete a second questionnaire at program's end. This questionnaire will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The Partners in Print family literacy nights are from 6 to 8 pm on the following evenings: September 27, October 11, October 25 and November 15. There will also be a celebration and evaluation ceremony where the second questionnaire will be distributed on December 6. If you cannot attend the celebration ceremony, the second questionnaire will be mailed to you.

Risks/benefits: The only risks involved with this study involve the possibility that questions regarding parent empowerment and parent education may be considered sensitive. Also there is a time commitment. In order for me to obtain an adequate amount of data, participants must attend at least three of the four events. The data gathered by this research study will be shared in my dissertation. The primary objective of this research study is to evaluate Partners in Print so that we can know if it's a good program to keep at our school. You will be contacted if the study design or the use of information changes.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Questionnaires will ask parent's name (for record keeping), gender and ethnicity. No names or other identifying information will be released in the study. Consent forms and questionnaires will be kept in a locked file in a locked office until the end of the study and then destroyed.

Voluntary nature/questions: Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school, researcher, or Loyola Marymount University. You may still attend the Partners in Print family nights if you do not consent to participating in the study. Also, there may be circumstance where the researcher may conclude your participation before the study ends. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the school, researcher, or Loyola Marymount University. Also, you have the right to refuse to answer any questionnaire items that you do not wish to answer. If you have any questions, please send an email to rgodbey@lion.lmu.edu.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate.

Thank you,

Rebecca Godbey
Doctoral Student
Loyola Marymount University

Signature of Parent Participant_____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey

Demographics: race, ethnicity, gender, attendance

Unstructured Question Items: When answering these questions, please consider literacy in the language you prefer.

1. What are your reasons for participating in Partners in Print?
2. As a parent, what do you believe your role is in your child's education?
3. What things do you do to help your child at home with literacy?
4. List any materials that are in your home that help your child with reading and writing.

Structured Question Items: When answering these questions, please consider literacy in the language you prefer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I am confident that I am able to help my child build literacy skills.					
6. I have the necessary skills to help my child with literacy at home.					
7. I can make a difference in my child's learning.					

	Once a month or less	2-3 times a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	5 or more times a week
8. How often do you read to your child?					
9. How often do you talk about a book with your child?					
10. How often do you help your child learn the sounds and names of the alphabet letters?					
11. How often do you sing songs, play rhyming games or say nursery rhymes with your child?					
12. How often do you help your child write letters or words such as the names of family and friends?					

	0-2 books	3-10 books	11-20 books	21-40 books	More than 40 books
13. If you counted today, how many children's books (includes library books) do you have in your home for your child's use?					

Post-test Questions

At each Partners in Print night, you were given handouts to take home. Please consider these handouts when answering the following questions.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Overall, the Partners in Print handouts taught me something new about how to help my child with reading and writing.					
15. Overall, the Partners in Print handouts helped me feel more capable and confident in helping my child with reading and writing.					

APPENDIX C

Methodology Matrix

Research Questions	Theoretical Conceptual Framework	Literature	Method	Data Sources	Analysis/ Statistical Treatment
What is the impact on the family's home literacy environment after kindergarten and first grade families have consistently participated in Partners in Print, a school-based family literacy program?	Development as Transformation of Participation	Rogoff, 1995; Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995; Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, & Lacasa, 2002.	Qualitative Unstructured Question Items	Parent Empowerment and Home Literacy Environment Survey (PEHLES) Questions 3 and 4.	Typological Analysis. Responses will be coded to reveal emerging themes.
			Quantitative Likert Scale Survey Questions	PEHLES Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.	Descriptive and Inferential statistics, including t-test comparisons.
What impact does the participation in the family literacy program, Partners in Print, have towards empowering and educating parents in efforts to promote their child's literacy development?	The Empowerment Process Model	Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010	Qualitative Unstructured Question Items	PEHLES Questions 1, 2, and 3.	Typological Analysis. Responses will be coded to reveal emerging themes.
			Quantitative Likert Scale Survey Questions	PEHLES Questions 6, 7, and 8.	Descriptive and Inferential statistics, including t-test comparisons.

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