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A parent workshop for motivating emergent literacy in English

Patricia Jean Bohanan

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A PARENT WORKSHOP FOR MOTIVATING

EMERGENT LITERACY IN ENGLISH

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education:

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

_____

by

Patricia Jean Bohanan

March 2002

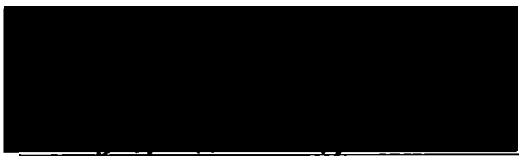A PARENT WORKSHOP FOR MOTIVATING

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Creating a learning environment that is academically
and personally challenging, stimulating, and motivating
for all students is one of the most difficult aspects of
teaching. Instilling the desire to learn to read is
additionally challenging, as each English language learner
enters the classroom with differing levels of ability, as
well as with differing types of experiences with
literature. Students need more than books to motivate and
encourage them to learn. Rather, they need a classroom
that excites them to learn new things, encourages
experimentation, builds independence, and fosters a
community of learners, and that provides an engaging,
challenging, and motivation-enhancing environment in which
everyone can learn.

The goal of this project is to help teachers create a
motivation-enhancing literacy environment that increases
students' reading ability, improves the understanding of
written material, fosters a love of reading, and develops
life-long learners. Through the use of high-quality
literature and careful, well-planned lessons, students
will be exposed to engaging literacy experiences that will
motivate and encourage them to become better readers. This
project will also serve as a model for teachers to use to
plan and implement motivation-enhancing workshops for
parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

I honestly believe that teaching reading is truly an investment in human capital. This project is dedicated to the children who come through my classroom door day in and day out. It is they who have been my guide and inspiration. From them, I have learned that there are many paths that lead to literacy. So to my students, whose bright eyes and eager minds have so willingly taken to the daunting task of learning to read, I thank you for lighting the way for me. It is my privilege to have been your teacher.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Background of the Study

California's student population, the most diverse in the United States, is an indicator of educational challenges yet to unfold throughout the nation. From 1997 to 2007 the percentage of white students in California is expected to decline by 16 percent, while other groups will increase by the following percentages: Hispanic (+ 35%), Pacific Islander (+ 30%), and Asian (+ 15%). By 2000, no ethnic group constituted a majority of California's population (California Department of Education [CDE], 1999).

Today, one out of five California students was born outside the United States. Approximately 1.4 million of the 5.7 million students in California are identified as English Language Learners [ELL students] (Quezada, Wiley, & Ramirez, 1999/2000). Many Californian students live in poverty, a significant indicator for academic risk. Approximately 2.7 million (47%) of the state's 5.7 million students come from low-income backgrounds. Nearly half (48%) of California's students were receiving free or reduced price meals in 1996-97 (CDE, 1999).

The number of English Language Learners in California schools has increased at a rate much higher than predicted even a few short years ago. Now, one of every four students in Californian K-12 schools is an English Language Learner, and an estimated 40% of all students in the kindergarten and first grade are learning English as a second language.

This represents a major challenge for schools and teachers and requires that, if educational reforms are to be effective in California, they must include English Language Learners within the fabric of those reforms. Struggling readers, especially those in special programs, typically get low-level, fragmented skill instruction rather than opportunities to actually read and write (Johnson & Allington, 1991).

In the past 20 years, U.S. schools have experienced a tremendous influx of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Every state has experienced this increase; and California, in particular, which has the most diverse schools in the nation, has become a breeding ground for educational policy and political debate.

Focus on Accountability

In this climate of diversity, the Golden State is spearheading accountability measures and standards-based

reform for all students. As the push for accountability, standards, and reform intensifies, one must carefully analyze policies that dictate a one-size-fits-all solution. This analysis is especially important when the proposed solutions seek to increase the literacy development of diverse learners in a highly politicized educational environment.

The political debate about how best to educate English Language Learners is far from new. In the midst of this debate is the tremendous educational challenge facing California schools. Proposition 227 passed on June 2, 1998. This new law mandated the virtual elimination of bilingual education programs and called for instruction in English only. For the two months after its passage, school districts worked feverishly to institute the Sheltered English-Immersion (SEI) programs outlined in the Proposition 227 legislation, and subsequently delineated by the State Board of Education. Sheltered, or Structured, English-Immersion programs are taught primarily in English and are based on the notion that all students can learn English and then catch up on academic content.

Too many language-minority students are failing in schools today, and there is no question that literacy programs for diverse student populations need reform. Yet,

will current national and state reform agendas for the promotion of literacy address the needs of at-risk students in linguistically, culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse settings?

The reading performance of California students across all ethnic and linguistic groups continues to lag behind that of most states. Similarly, when California's 1998 Standford-9 achievement results are disaggregated, the results are comparable to the NAEP findings: Students of color consistently score lower than white students. Moreover, the California data also clearly document that ELL students consistently are the lowest achieving of all students in the state (CDE, 1999).

To teach reading well is to ensure that the students will become productive members of society. To teach reading poorly will place the students into the ever-growing pool of functional illiterates. According to the latest figures, functionally illiteracy has risen to 3.1 million in the state of California alone (California State Board of Education, 1996).

Many students at risk of failure, particularly recent immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities, attend schools with unequal resources and poorly prepared teachers (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). In an effort to address

both the literacy problems and the more fundamental problem of inequitable achievement across diverse groups, many states, including California, have launched major reform initiatives, including class-size reduction, standards-based reform, and technology-assisted instruction.

The focus on accountability dictates that English Language Learners meet the same standards and take the same standardized assessments as native English speaking students, even though they do not have access to the type of instruction that would allow them to meet these standards.

In order to create a motivation-enhancing literacy environment despite the pressure for accountability, the academic, social, and personal needs of the ELL students must be addressed. That is, the teacher must provide not only interesting and engaging subject matter, but also opportunities for students to collaborate with their peers, while at the same time retaining individual responsibility for their own learning process. This balances collaboration with individual accountability while fostering the love of learning.

Current Challenges to the Teaching of Reading

While the challenge to educate English Language Learners in California is significant, it is not as daunting as sometimes suggested. The use of excellent reading instruction strategies will be beneficial in guiding educators to improve teaching for all students. This project includes research that is relevant to good teaching as it relates to a balanced literacy program, motivating ELL students, and the importance of parent involvement to promote the love of reading. This focus on balanced literacy by both educators and parents helps motivate ELL students to read both at home and in school.

As in every domain of learning, motivation is crucial. Although most children begin school with positive attitudes and expectations for success, by the end of the primary grades and increasingly thereafter, some children become disaffected. The majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults are the result of problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years. It is imperative that steps be taken to ensure that children overcome these obstacles during the primary grades.

Increasing the number of children who enter school with adequate literacy-related knowledge and skills is an

important first step toward preventing reading difficulties. This would serve to reduce a major problem currently facing many Californian schools. Children who are particularly likely to have difficulty with learning to read in the primary grades are those who begin school with less prior knowledge and skills in relevant domains: most notably, general verbal abilities, the ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning, familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading, and letter knowledge.

In addition, children from poor neighborhoods, children with limited proficiency in English (ELL students), children with hearing impairments, children with preschool language impairments, and children whose parents had difficulty learning to read are particularly at risk of arriving at school with weaknesses in these areas and hence of falling behind from the rest of the students.

Learning is a constructive activity and children learn best when schools provide a wide range of experiences and the instruction necessary to encourage them to read in the service of learning. This project meshes guided reading with constructivism, guided by the belief that by providing good texts, parental support, and

motivational encouragement, all children can become independent readers early in their school careers.

This project takes a constructivist approach in which the instructional emphasis shifts from being teacher centered to student centered. Teachers are aware that children bring to literacy a wide range of experiences and competencies. When they are given opportunities to read from authentic literature and participate in activities that provide intrinsic motivation, such as experimentation, observation, reflection, discussion, interaction among peers, and group work, they will take charge of their own learning and be able to think more critically.

Purpose of Reading

Educators worldwide have considered not only the importance of children's becoming proficient readers, but also the impact that reading may have on a child's success in all subject areas. This means that non-fiction reading--reading in the content areas--is an important part of reading instruction. For example, in mathematics, one must be able to read and understand a word problem before being expected to solve it. In biology, if children want to better understand the relationship between humans and apes, they might need to visit the library and gather

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information from books, encyclopedias, magazines, or possibly even the Internet. A child who does not possess the ability to read and comprehend English fluently, such as an ELL student, might find futile these attempts to gain additional knowledge. Thus, it is very important for children to learn to read in English; unfortunately, however, it is not very easy to teach any child to read.

In addition to non-fiction reading, children's experiences with literature have an impact on their ability to learn to read. In the case of positive experiences with literature, a child will likely develop into a strong reader. On the other hand, in the case of a child for whom reading for pleasure or information at home may not have been a priority, or who may have had many negative experiences with reading such that they are less motivated to change or improve their reading ability, a classroom teacher is presented with a major challenge. In an effort to improve students' motivation and desire to be successful across all subjects, it is important to create an environment that supports rather than stifle change and improvement.

Because the ability to read and comprehend greatly impacts a student's success across the curriculum here in California, it is imperative that the classroom teacher

focus on improving student literacy before tackling other subject areas.

Whether in literature or content reading, it is imperative that students become self-motivated as learners. Thus, the central question becomes, "What can the classroom teacher do that would motivate students to want to read and learn?" As teachers continue to build and redefine their classroom reading programs, it is important to examine how children learn to read, as well as the role that others play in this development.

What is Reading?

Skilled reading is constructive. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to reason about written material, drawing on knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study. Skilled reading is also fluent. Becoming a skilled reader depends upon mastering basic processes to the point where they are automatic, so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning.

Furthermore, skilled reading is strategic. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to control one's reading in relation to one's purpose, the nature of the material, and the comprehensibility of the text. Skilled reading is motivated. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to sustain attention, and learning that written material can

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be interesting and informative. Most of all, skilled reading is a lifelong pursuit. Becoming a skilled reader is a matter of continuous practice, development, and refinement.

Three Theories of Reading

Three theoretical orientations about reading continue to guide educators in the development of their classroom literacy programs. These theoretical orientations (phonics, skills, and socio-psycholinguistic) represent three areas that are the subject of much debate and research. In the past, proponents of each theoretical orientation believed that there was only one way to teach reading; however, upon further investigation, an integration of all three approaches might provide the most optimal learning environment for children.

At on end of the continuum is the phonics approach to reading. The phonics approach to reading supports the idea that children's understanding of print comes from the individual letters and sounds in a word. That is, a child must first know the alphabet and the sounds that they make in order to fully understand the meaning from any print.

This part-to-whole thinking requires that students receive explicit instruction in phonics and letters at an early age, between the ages 3-5, to prepare the child for

reading, and that no prior experience with print is needed.

At the middle of the continuum is the skills approach to reading. This approach places an emphasis on the whole word rather than its individual sounds and letters. Learning to read, according to this theoretical orientation; is broken into sub-skills (e.g., word lists) and children are expected to put the pieces (i.e., the words) together as they read.

The skills approach, oftentimes considered just as a sight-word approach, has children learn a large amount of words that are easily recognizable (e.g., the, is, cat). Once the child has knowledge of approximately one hundred of these basic sight words, it is believed that the child can then read about one-half of all printed material (Weaver, 1994). Again, as with phonics approach, it is assumed that students can learn to read once they have mastered all of the "parts" of language and that reading comprehension will be automatic for every student.

Finally, at the other end of the reading continuum is the socio-psycholinguistic approach to reading. The socio-psycholinguistic approach assumes that all people can read, write, speak, and listen in English as long as they are provided with the proper support and guidance.

Reading, from this perspective, is defined as a process that combines three interrelated cueing systems: graphic, syntactic, and semantic. The three systems are seen as interrelated and allow the reader to predict, confirm, and integrate meaning from the text. As a result, reading instruction is viewed as a process that requires repeated exposure and experience with literature.

Purpose of the Project

This project presents a six-lesson parent training curriculum to empower parents to teach their children to read at home. The training focuses on learning to read in English, but the same training, once learned, can be transferred to Spanish. It is important that parents follow similar procedures with their children at home as does the teacher at school. This helps ensure that students maintain a positive attitude towards reading by means of this consistent approach between home and school.

Significance of the Project

Parents play roles of immense importance in laying the foundation for learning to read. Parents should informally teach preschool children about reading and writing by reading aloud to them, discussing stories and events, encouraging them to learn letters and words, and

teaching them about the world around them. These practices help prepare children for success in reading.

Parents have an obligation to support their children's continued growth as readers. In addition to laying a basic foundation, parents need to facilitate the growth of their children's reading by taking them to libraries, encouraging reading as a free time activity, and assisting the child with homework.

Creating a learning environment that is both academically and personally challenging, stimulating, and motivating for all students is one of the most difficult aspects of teaching. Parents can assist by creating a parallel environment at home that supports emergent literacy. Instilling the desire to learn to read is additionally challenging, as each ELL student enters the classroom with differing levels of English speaking, reading, and writing ability, as well as with differing types of experience with literature.

It is the educational development that happens within the classroom walls and at home that excites ELL students to learn new things, encourages experimentation, builds independence, fosters a community of learners, and provides an engaging, challenging, and

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motivation-enhancing environment in which all children can learn.

Providing a model for Title I parent workshops, the proposed project can be used as a theoretical guide for giving teachers and administrators background knowledge on motivating ELL students to read as will as provide a guide to train parents to teach reading.

Californian schools receiving Title I funding are required to spend a minimum of 1% of their annual budget on parent education. Parents, once trained, not only can enhance their children's reading and comprehension skills at home, but also are welcome in the classroom as volunteers.

Using this model, parents may become empowered with the necessary skills to motivate their children to read, at the same time enhancing their child's inherent learning potential, which will increase the children's achievement throughout their lives.

Limitations

The project as set forth here is not without its limitations, however. Although research has shown that ELL students who are provided a literacy environment that incorporates cognitive strategies, social interaction, and

a coherent, integrated-instructional program demonstrate

higher intrinsic motivation, which in turn leads to higher

levels of achievement, not all students will experience

the same successes. Even though the context of the ELL

students' learning environment is critical, other

extraneous outside factors (i.e., poverty, neglect, broken

families) may make it difficult for an ELL student to

benefit from the motivation-enhancing literacy

opportunities within the classroom. Additionally, other

factors, such as the relationship between the ELL student

and the teacher or student-to-student relationships, may

have a negative impact on the positive classroom

experiences. So, while the program components have been

demonstrated as successful in research investigations,

real-world influences may change the nature of the program

and limit its effectiveness.

Another project limitation is inadequate school

funding. Unfortunately, many elementary schools are

severely deprived of money and may not be able to move

away from the district-mandated reading programs and adopt

a literature-based reading program. Additionally, a school

with limited funding may also lack computers, reference

materials, classroom libraries, or even a well-stocked

school library which would enable students to enrich their

learning through researching, investigating, questioning, and challenging existing ideas. These limitations may make it difficult to fully educate all ELL students.

A third limitation of this project is one which impacts educators across the country: time. It takes time to plan and develop an integrated, motivation-enhancing environment. However, teachers are busy individuals, finding the time to develop a literacy-engaging environment may be a significant challenge. High-quality instruction takes time and care in both planning and implementation in the classroom; however, when time is limited, teachers might feel the need to rely on the prescribed, district-mandated program to maintain their own personal health.

Although these three limitations mentioned (i.e., student influences, inadequate funding, insufficient planning time) can have a negative impact on the development of a motivation-enhancing classroom environment, steps can be taken to minimize, or even prevent them from occurring. For example, individual student concerns are an important part of the development of a positive classroom environment. If the teacher knows that a student's personal circumstances prevent the child from doing schoolwork or research outside the classroom,

then the teacher can look for ways to utilize the school day to help meet the learning needs of the student.

Likewise, if limited funding prevents a teacher from revising the current literacy program, smaller changes can be made, such as sharing materials, using literature to supplement rather than dominate the literature program, utilizing the public libraries, and involving the community. The teacher is then able to implement as many of the motivation-enhancing principles as possible without major school funding.

Thirdly, while having enough time seems to be an issue that will never be resolved, there are some possible solutions. The initial planning of this type of Parent Literacy Workshops program is what takes the most time. Consequently, if the teacher is able to plan the one or two parent workshops ahead of time, possibly during the summer months, with the understanding and flexibility for potential changes to occur, then the teacher would be more likely to implement and maintain this type of learning environment. As each year passes, the teacher would then need to update and revise portions of each parent workshop, as well as make modifications, as need, for individual students. Thus, a huge block of time is only needed in the initial planning, with smaller amounts of

time needed for revision and updating ideas for future parent workshops and teacher training.

Content of the Project

Chapter One is directed toward the goal of promoting literacy in English as a second language through utilizing parents as volunteers both in the classroom and at home and increasing motivation. This project introduces a literacy program called Parent Literacy Workshops and furnishes lesson plans for introducing the program to teachers and parents.

In Chapter Two, the literature review focuses on the following points. Parents can be informed about the importance of their role in their children's early literacy formation and how they can take an active role in the reading development of their children. They can be shown how to create a home environment that promotes literacy growth and motivates children to want to learn, as well as how to effectively read aloud to their children. They can also be shown how to make greater use of questioning which involves higher level thinking when they and their children are engaged in conversations about books. When reading aloud to their children, parents can also be shown methods that will enhance their children's

reading readiness and prepare them for formal reading instruction. Studies have reported information about several programs around the country that promote reading aloud to children and how educators and parents are working together to connect literacy in the home and school.

The review of the literature also includes a discussion of the theoretical foundations of the various components of literacy, such as the transmissive approach and constructivism, that are commonly integrated into a balanced literacy program. Also featured is research on motivation, phonemic awareness, guided reading, flexible grouping, and parental involvement.

Chapter Three presents a model of the reading strategies and techniques that are used in the guided reading lesson plan. Additional resources, practical ideas, suggestions on how to involve parents, and information about the ideal classroom environment are included.

In Chapter Four, the curriculum is introduced that serves as a resource for primary classroom teachers in working with parents to improve literacy. This curriculum incorporates research on reading, motivation, and parent involvement that was presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five, contains criteria for the formative assessments, a proposed plan of assessments, and the results of the assessments and how they will be utilized.

Summary

To summarize, the goal of this project is to create a literacy learning environment, both at home and in school, in which students can investigate and explore new ideas, develop critical thinking skills, improve overall reading ability and become life-long learners. While some limitations to the project do exist (i.e., students, funding, time), the overall positive effect of developing a motivation-enhancing literacy environment makes it worth the time, energy, and effort that must be invested.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the literature reveals the worth of improving the literacy acquisition of children by the addition of parent volunteers to the classroom setting. Moreover, current research shows strong support for the benefit of parents' working with their children at home. The skills gained through this home support can be carried over into the classroom setting. Applying insight gained from current literature on parent involvement to design a Parent Literacy Workshops would benefit these students, who at present may not have adequate support at home. With this in mind, the following review will focus on a rationale for parent volunteers, the whole language philosophy, and adult support for early literacy acquisition.

During the last decade there has been an increasing interest in children's literacy motivation, or literacy engagement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Literacy engagement is a multi-dimensional construct that occurs when students believe in their ability, are highly interested in the task, hold multiple learning and thinking strategies,

expect success, and demonstrate involvement in the learning process (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). One impetus for this work is the recognition that children's ability and desire to read are fundamental components of their academic experience. In addition, the concern for affective factors (e.g., desire, interest and attitude) in reading instruction and practice has also fueled an interest in research on literacy motivation. As a result, a growing body of research has examined the links among interpersonal influences (e.g., social interaction), intrapersonal factors (e.g., cognitive strategies), contextual factors (e.g., classroom environment), and children's literacy engagement.

This literature review provides a summary of two traditional theories of motivation. Additionally, four fundamental components of the educational experience that promote literacy engagement are reviewed. These components include children's conceptual understanding of material, individual use of cognitive strategies, social interaction, and supportive classroom contexts that are autonomy-supportive, collaborative, coherent, observational, metacognitive, expressive, and conceptual.

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Motivation and Literacy Engagement

Motivation can be seen as an intention, or reason, for doing something, like reading a book (Ng, Guthrie, McCann, Van Meter, & Alao, 1996). One can be motivated to read the book due to a genuine interest in the book (intrinsic motivation), or one can be motivated to read the book as a result of outside influences, such as stickers or points [extrinsic motivation] (Rotter, 1966). Guthrie (1996) suggested that intrinsic motivation is critical to literacy engagement. Additional research has shown that intrinsically motivated students experience high-quality learning, enjoy a better conceptual understanding of material, and experience enhanced personal growth compared to individuals who are motivated by extrinsic factors (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). Researchers involved in the development of literacy engagement have borrowed extensively from traditional theories of motivation. Further discussion of two traditional theories of motivation are needed to explain the role that motivation plays in literacy engagement.

The Goal-Oriented Theories of Motivation

Literacy motivation can be explained by goal-oriented theories of motivation (Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992). In goal-oriented theories, the individual has a reason, or

purpose, for reading and writing. According to Ng et al., 1996, students may have either a learning goal or performance goal for literary. Dweck and Leggett (1988) suggested that students with learning goals want to read and write to gain knowledge or information, whereas students with performance goals complete the activity in order to please the teacher or to earn the designated points. The students with learning goals will experience greater understanding and appreciation for the new material than the individuals with performance goals. This research suggests that classroom literacy activities should be meaningful and informative (i.e., emphasize learning) for the students, as opposed to activities that emphasize a specific level of achievement. If literature activities are meaningful and informative, students will become engaged in literacy.

Self-Determination Theory

According to Dweck and Leggett, (1988), students with learning goals are intrinsically motivated. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory suggested that students' motivation is a function of three factors. First is the ability to understand how to achieve and maintain a specific outcome. Second is the need to have strong relationships with both teacher and parents. Finally,

autonomy or the need to self-initiate and self-regulate

one's own behavior is hypothesized to influence

motivation. Self-determination theory suggests that

individuals who experience competence, relatedness, and

autonomy will become intrinsically motivated.

Recently, self-determination theory has been

extensively applied to the general educational setting.

For example, Vallerand (1983) found that positive feedback

(which tends to increase perceptions of competence)

increases intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Ryan (1982)

reported that positive feedback increased intrinsic

motivation, so long as it was provided in an

autonomy-supportive environment. Thus, when praising

children on their performance, it is important to

recognize that their being able to regulating their own

learning is more important than their being able to simply

follow the teacher's directions. Although positive

feedback in an autonomy-supportive environment can

increase motivation, negative feedback can decrease

intrinsic motivation and "leave people feeling unmotivated

and helpless" (Boggiano & Barrett, as cited in Deci et

al., 1991, p. 334). In general, negative feedback in any

form has a destructive impact on student's feeling of

competence and self-worth and should not have a place in children's performance evaluations.

Research supporting the need for children to have strong relationships with their teachers and parents as a means of facilitating intrinsic motivation has also been reported. Grolnick, Ryan, and Deci (as cited in Deci et al., 1991), reported that "parents and teachers who are more involved with their children have children who are more motivated and self-determined, particularly when the involvement is accompanied by autonomy support" (p. 338). Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, and Ryan (1981) found teachers who were autonomy-supportive had students who demonstrated greater motivation than students with teacher who were labeled as "controlling." Lastly, Ryan and Grolnick (1986) contended that students who perceived the teacher to be autonomy-supportive not only showed increased motivation, but higher self-esteem as well. Therefore, it is important for teachers and parents to work together to support students in their personal and academic lives. A communication support network ensures that students are aware that both the teacher and the parents are concerned for the students' well being and will work together to help the students meet their educational goals.

Research addressing the need for students to experience autonomy has also been reported. Deci et al. (1991) recommended an educational setting that "provides students with the opportunity to participate in the decision process relative to educational activities" (p. 336), will, in turn, promote self-regulation of the activity, resulting in increased motivation and learning. Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, and Deci (1978) found that intrinsic motivation for a group of college students increased after they were given choices about an educational activity and allowed to adjust the amount of time needed to complete the activity. Deci et al. (1991) also found that an emphasis on choice, rather than controlling style, helped maintain students' motivation when they were faced with an uninteresting activity. Thus, it is imperative for the students to perceive autonomy support. According to Deci et al. (1991), this begins with an understanding of children's motivational and developmental backgrounds. If students perceive autonomy support in the learning environment, literacy engagement should occur.

Conceptual Understanding and Engagement

Guthrie suggested that conceptual understanding is a key component of literacy engagement. Specifically, he

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argued that children who read "gain concepts that explain" (1996, p. 434). Conceptual learning, in turn, is enhanced by intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) motivation. Thus, children with an intrinsic motivation towards reading are expected to understand better and apply more broadly what they learn about in the process of reading. According to Guthrie (1996), when children can understand and apply literature, they are engaged in literacy.

Cognitive Strategies and Literacy Engagement

Guthrie (1996) proposed that the use of cognitive strategies (e.g., problem finding) is instrumental to children's conceptual learning. In particular, students who can use strategies demonstrate greater learning than students who have less well-developed cognitive strategies. For example, Graesser, Golding, and Long (1991) emphasized that comprehending multiple literature genres contributed to greater literacy learning. Likewise, Anderson and Pearson (1984) demonstrated that students who have the ability to relate prior knowledge to current learning situations are better able to learn new material and have a better conceptual understanding of the material. Ultimately, children who employ strategies will learn better conceptually and thus are more likely to be engaged in literacy.

Social Interaction and Literacy Engagement

Social interaction is an important component in
literacy motivation or engagement (Guthrie, 1996). Ng et
al. (1996) examined literacy motivation and found that
third graders' perceived social interaction (i.e., their
perceptions regarding relationships with others) was a
critical predictor of reading motivation. "When they (the
third graders) thought the situation allowed them to talk,
discuss books, exchange their writings, and clarify their
confusions, these third graders were more likely to be
involved, curious, and socially interactive" (p. 25-26).
Moreover, for fifth graders in this same study, it was
perceived that autonomy support influences their intrinsic
motivation. "When the grade-5 students thought the
situation gave them freedom to choose what books they
read, latitude in defining the reading tasks, opportunity
to respond in their own ways, and the liberty to interact
with other students if they needed to, they reported
relatively high intrinsic motivation" (Ng et al., 1996,
p. 26). What was interesting regarding Ng et al.'s (1996)
findings was that it was the students' perceptions of
social interaction and autonomy support that increased
their intrinsic motivation and not the context, or
learning situation itself. That is, regardless of the

intended learning environment, it was the students'
perception of what was occurring that most significally
influenced their motivation. That is not to say, however,
that the context of the learning activity is not valuable,
but rather it highlights the importance of childrens'
perceptions of what is taking place in addition to the
classroom context. "It is when students' motivation to
read and the classroom contexts are aligned that students
will be energized to fulfill their literacy goals" (Ng et
al., 1996, p. 27).

Classroom Contexts and Literacy Engagement

Although student perceptions mediate the relationship
between classroom context and intrinsic motivation, the
classroom environment is still a vital part of student
motivation and literacy learning (Ng et al., 1996). A
number of classroom characteristics have been identified
in motivational research as being likely to increase
intrinsic motivation. The following categories will be
used to classify the necessary components of an engaging
literacy classroom environment: self-directing
(autonomy-supportive), coherent, collaborative,
observational, metacognitive, expressive, and conceptual
(see Table 1).

Table 1. Motivation-Enhancing Environment

Dimensions	Description
Observational	Classroom provides opportunities for students to ask questions based on real-world experiences
Conceptual	Classrooms are focused on important topics rather than separate, independent skills
Self-directing	Activities are supportive of student autonomy and choice
Metacognitive	Instruction includes explicit teaching of reading strategies, problem-solving, and self-evaluative techniques
Collaborative	Classroom provides numerous opportunities for collaborative learning
Expressive	Classroom provides opportunities for self expressions through a variety of means
Coherent	Learning is connected across the curriculum, as will as, to real-world experiences

(adapted from Blumenfeld, 1992)

Self-Directing/Autonomy-Supportive. Deci et al.

(1991) reported that an autonomy-supportive environment

(i.e., support for individuals' needs) is a key element in

creating a highly motivating classroom. Teachers are

encouraged to offer students choices in their literacy

activities, acknowledge their feelings about the subject,

and include students in the decision-making process (Deci et al., 1991). These findings were supported by Skinner and Belmont (1993), who found higher levels of student intrinsic motivation when the teacher encouraged free expression of ideas, provided choice in their learning activity, and invited students to participate in classroom decisions. Similarly, Grolnick and Ryan (1987) found that teacher support for students' interests helping students set learning goals, and allowing students participation in the decision making process all contributed to higher levels of intrinsic motivation.

Coherence. Coherence "is the extent to which literacy learning tasks are related to other academic learning situations in the day, week, or month of the students' school-life or to out-of-school experiences" (Ng et al., 1996, p. 4). For example, if students are reading stories about animals in language arts, then the science activities could revolve around examining different animal habitats, while in math the students could be determining the cost of taking care of a family pet. Whatever the content of the lessons, the learning situations can be organized so that they are related and important in the lives of the students. In addition, Newby (1991) suggested that students' intrinsic motivation increases when the

content of the learning situation is related to their

prior or past experiences with similar information.

Further, Turner and Paris (1995) found that when students

were presented with open learning tasks (i.e., literature

circles) as opposed to closed learning tasks (i.e.,

worksheets) the students were more persistent with their

learning and discovery. Each of these situations

highlights the importance of students' making sense of the

learning through appropriately planned literacy

activities.

Collaborative. The need for a community of learners

(Brown, 1994) is also an integral part of the classroom

context. When students feel supported by teachers and

peers and their ideas are respected, they experience

higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Ames, 1984; Skinner

& Belmont, 1993). Plenty of opportunities for students to

work together, to collaborate on ideas, and to solve

problems are also important in promoting higher levels of

motivation (Meloth & Deering, 1994). Ng et al. (1996)

found that third graders who perceived that the learning

situation allowed them to talk, discuss books, share their

writing, and solve problems were motivated by this.

Similarly, Palmer, Codling, and Gambrell (1994)

interviewed elementary school children and found that

highly motivated students enjoyed reading books

recommended by their peers and particularly enjoyed having

the opportunity to talk about the books with their

friends. Further, Morrow (1992) identified three

motivating factors for children during literacy

activities. Providing opportunities for social

interaction, having a large quantity of reading materials,

and the teacher's emphasis on free, or choice, reading led

to increased levels of intrinsic motivation. These

findings indicate the importance of social interaction

with respect to literacy motivation.

Observational. Students need opportunities to

initiate their learning by generating their own questions

from real-world observations (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997).

Classroom activities that allow students to observe an

object, such as a bird, in its natural environment,

encourage students to begin thinking of questions about

birds that would lead to further discussion. Guthrie and

Wigfield (1997) found that students were more engaged in

their learning when they had an opportunity to first

observe and reflect upon a specific object before actually

learning about it.

Metacognitive. Students need opportunities for

explicit teaching of reading strategies, problem-solving

experiences, and composition, or writing, activities. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) found that students were most engaged in literacy when they were taught how to research information, take notes, critique books, understand differences between fact and opinion, and understand differences in book organization. The students were taught these different strategies and skills through teacher modeling, peer modeling, teacher scaffolding, guided practice, and teamwork (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). These findings indicate the importance of providing students with the knowledge about how to think and how to utilize information as a means of encouraging greater student involvement in literacy tasks.

Expressive. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) recommended classroom contexts that encourage self-expression through writing, debating and group interaction. This allowed the students to demonstrate their creativity and self-expression through a variety of media. The students were taught how to do written reports, class-authored books, dioramas, charts, and informational stories. In addition, these students were encouraged to share their work in both small and large groups as a way of self-expression. As a result of the opportunity to be expressive, students were more interested and more engaged

in the literacy tasks (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). This research suggested the importance of including opportunities for students to be creative and expressive in their tasks, as well as an opportunity to share them with others.

Conceptual. A conceptual classroom context is one that is focused in important topics rather than independent skills. Ng et al. (1996) found that students were more engaged and intrinsically motivated when the skills and strategies were taught within the context of the topic, or unit of study. Similarly, Maher and Fyans (1989) found that students experienced greater motivation when the students learned in a conceptually-oriented environment rather than a skills-based environment. These findings were found as a part of the student's daily experiences rather than as an independent series of skills.

Types of Assignments. The specific types of assignments students are asked to complete are also an important aspect of the classroom context in promoting intrinsic motivation. Miller, Adkins, and Hooper (1993) found that if students were appropriately challenged on the literacy task, the amount of time and interest towards that activity increased. Additionally, those literacy

tasks that required higher-level cognitive strategies (Ames & Archer, 1988) and more sophisticated writing activities (i.e., one or two paragraph requirements) encouraged more student involvement and interest (Applebee, 1984). Thus, there is some evidence that the type of assignments students receive also affects literacy motivation.

What a person
thinks

What a person
hears

What a person
speaks

Motivation
is a basis
for

What a person
writes

What a person
reads
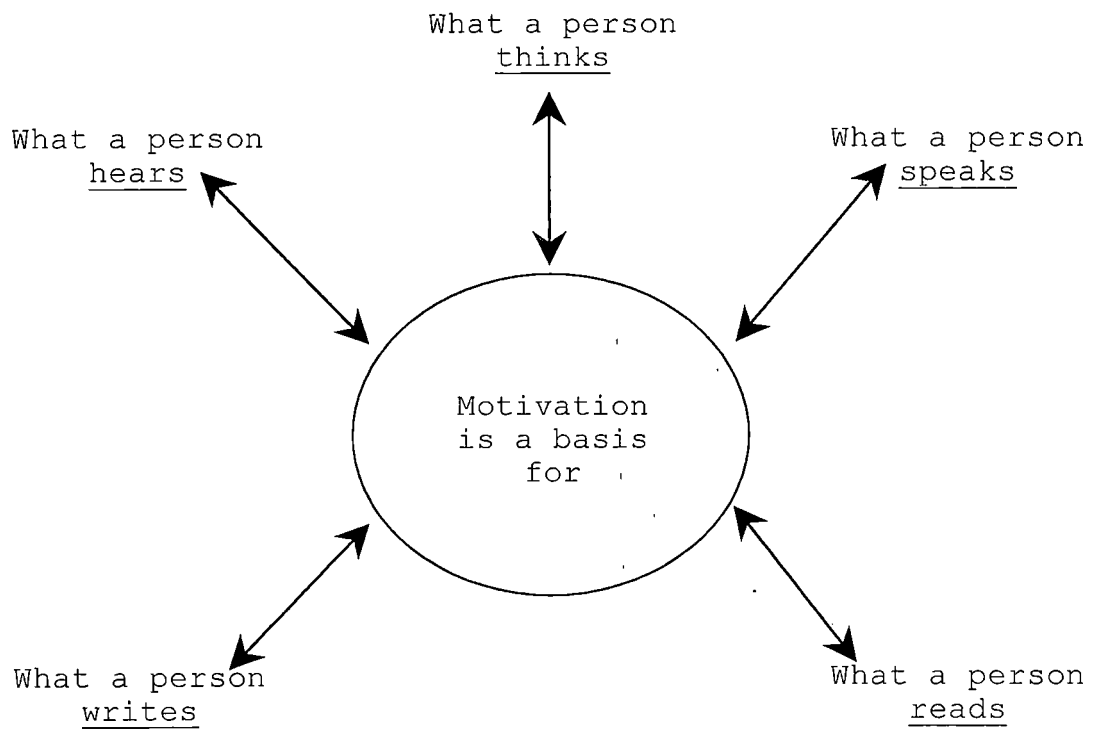
Figure 1. Basis for Motivation

Role of Literature in a Motivation-Enhancing
   Environment

Goodman (1996) contended that "the key to learning
written language with ease is that (children's) literacy
events focus on authentic texts and authentic tasks"
(p. 125). That is, children learn more effectively when
learning from and reading good quality literature rather
than adapted versions of the stories housed in large basal
texts. The use of literature in the classroom exposes
students to a wide variety of topics, characters, and
experiences they might not otherwise enjoy if they
received instruction from basal textbooks.

The use of literature in the classroom promotes both
educational and personal values. Interaction with
authentic literature promotes growth of oral language
capabilities, increases reading ability, develops fluency,
improves critical thinking skills, introduces students to
the language of books (i.e., organization, purpose,
style), and improves student writing (Huck, Hepler,
Hickman, & Kiefer, 1996). In addition, Huck et al. (1996)
contended that using authentic literature promotes
personal values such as imagination and insight into human
behavior. The author further stated that literature allows
the person to vicariously live in another time or place,

or even as another person. These authentic, meaningful experiences are what contribute to enhanced literacy engagement in the classroom.

Literacy Begins at Home

Children can learn reading strategies from their parents and siblings as well as from their teachers. Many parents wait until their child enters kindergarten before they begin formally working with them on reading activities. Parents typically try to find the right teacher with the right reading program for their child.

There are many different theories on the acquisition of reading. When describing formal reading instruction, educational researchers use three major models: decoding skills, skills based, and whole language.

The decoding model strongly emphasizes phonetic awareness. Reading instruction is centered on sounds or phonemes. Most instruction time is spent learning the relationships between letters and sounds and sounding out letters in isolation. In this model, finding the meaning of a piece of literature is not emphasized. Sounding words out is the focus of this model. Reading aloud can give children a model of how letters and sounds create words;

however, the meaning of the story is secondary to decoding.

The skills model emphasizes memorization of sight words, lots of drill, and controlled vocabulary. This model utilizes, to a great extent, basal readers that have predetermined sequences for introducing vocabulary and skills. This is accomplished by the use of leveled basal readers, workbooks, and skill sheets. Many teachers and parents were taught to read in the skills model. Reading aloud to children exposes them to vocabulary and words beyond their current capabilities. The more children experience through listening to literature, the more prepared they are when asked to read on their own.

The whole language model emphasizes the "meaning" of a piece of literature. The major focus is primarily concerned with the entire text. While it does not place emphasis on the teaching of phonics, this model does not exclude the learning of letter sounds and words. In this model the syntax, grapheme/phoneme, context, and cueing systems are used to support the meaning of the text.

There are many methods for teaching children how to learn and develop literature skills. McCracken and McCracken (1987) believed that any method can work if the child has prior knowledge that books are about ideas, and

knows the melodies of print, the result of someone's having read to them.

No matter which methodology is emphasized in a classroom, there are instructional implications for why children benefit from coming to kindergarten having been read to by parents. Experiences with print, according to Gunn, Simmons, and Kameenui (1995), help preschool children

> develop an understanding of the conventions, purposes, and functions of print, learn how to attend to language and apply this knowledge to literacy situations by interacting with others who model language functions, and gain phonological awareness and letter recognition that contribute to initial reading acquisition by helping children develop efficient word recognition strategies; i.e., detecting pronunciations and storing associations in memory. (p. 7)

Literacy learning begins in the home as parents listen, speak, read and write with their children. For example, parents praise their infants when their initial sounds and noises begin to make sense. In the early stages of oral language, as an infant begins to speak, one word represents a whole thought to them. Massam and Kulik

(1990) agreed that children recognize that there is a relationship between the spoken and printed word, as their parents expose them to environmental print through speaking and reading.

Reading aloud to children is one of the strategies emphasized in the whole language model. McCracken and McCracken (1987) believed "the child's brain seems intuitively ready to solve the mysteries of language if we begin with meaningful wholes, the whole of language and the whole of meaning" (p. 13). Reading aloud helps children hear an entire piece of literature and gain meaning from the reading. In contrast, decoding and skills models focus on parts of words, sentences, and phrases.

When reading aloud, the focus is on the entire piece of literature. When Clay (1991) did some longitudinal monitoring, she found that as children learn many different strategies to understand print, they begin to understand the concepts of letters, sounds, and word analysis. As parents read to their children, they tend to help them focus on the meaning of the story and develop an enjoyment of literature. During this process, the children naturally see how language works while becoming involved with the characters, plot, and the underlying message in books.

As parents read aloud, children begin to understand the relationship between sounds and words, and see how print works. When a literacy program begins early, and includes phonics, basic sight words, and literature appreciation, both parent and child receive many benefits. The process of reading aloud to children, as part of a daily routine, helps young children to gain an understanding of book format, increase their interest in listening and enjoying literature, gain an interest and motivation to read themselves, and learn how language works.

An overwhelming body of research proves that children entering kindergarten without experiences with print and an understanding of how print works, face an uphill struggle with the acquisition of reading no matter which reading instruction model is used.

Over the years, kindergarten has become a year of acquiring academic skills and not a year of play and learning social skills. Thus it is of vital importance that preschool children experience reading during parent-child interactions.

In California, teachers come into contact with children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and numerous minority groups. Most children qualify for free breakfast

and lunch, and many come from single parent homes. When children like these, of differing background knowledge, culture, and language, enter kindergarten without literacy experiences, the teacher must assume the responsibility of providing the years of quality instruction they have missed.

This project will give teachers and parents a better understanding of the importance of reading with young children and use the research of noted scholars to validate these beliefs. It will include Parent Literacy Workshop activities that may be used by parents to expand upon their child's reading experience.

Reading aloud with children is important before they enter school. Pre-school exposure will help children develop many pre-reading skills naturally before entering kindergarten. Through early exposure and stimulation to the world of language, parents can enhance their child's inherent learning potential and develop an appreciation of literature that will support them throughout their lives.

Children's first and most powerful teachers are their parents. Parents establish the foundation for learning by supporting the acquisition of oral language (listening and speaking), building and awareness and knowledge of print,

and facilitating their child's ability to learn about the world.

Parents do all this, not necessarily through formal instruction, but by simply recognizing and assisting their child's efforts to learn. As an example, when the toddler is learning to speak, the parent is at the child's side, anticipating the message, accepting the approximations and supporting all efforts to communicate. Parents supply the missing words—extending the child's language by providing a model—thus acknowledging and validating the communication attempt. Learning to read is an extension of oral language (Cullinan, 1992). The same strategies parents use to encourage the development of speech are those needed to move a child into reading (Mooney, 1990).

The most reliable predictor for a child's success in learning to read is being read to, regularly, from an early age. This has been so proven by innumerable studies, that probably few would challenge it. However, Teale and Sulzby (1989), while agreeing that reading aloud is the most important indicator, maintained that it is not so much the fact that the child is read to but the quality of interaction between parent and child that makes the difference. It is the conversation that takes place between the capable reader and the learner as they explore

the pictures, talk about the story and relate it to their own experiences, that is so powerful in building a child's understanding of how print works. In addition, this collaboration contributes to concept development, extends the child's oral language and listening vocabulary, and strengthens the emotional bond between parent and child (Cullinan, 1992).

The most prevalent print, however, is not found in books but appears in the child's home, church, on the streets, in stores, restaurants, parks, and other public places. Becoming aware of this environmental print and its purpose is fundamental to the acquisition of written language. It is the parent who is most often there when a child notices a sign, points and asks, "What does that say?" According to research, adults can help children make sense of print by reading to them the print to which their attention is drawn.

Helping children read environmental print should be as natural as talking to them about other important things in their environment. It is probably more important than reading books because it serves a function, thereby making a direct connection to meaning (Jewell & Zintz, 1990).

Parents assist children in learning about the world. Children learn by making predictions, in the form of

generalizations, based on what they have already

discovered from encounters with their immediate

environment (Short, 1991). Daily activities provide

opportunities for learning language, concepts and

vocabulary: "Let's put on your blue jacket," "Bring me

three forks," "How many plates will we need?" A child's

store of experiences, and therefore his or her

opportunities to learn, are extended when parents use

ordinary and special activities as learning situations,

such as visits to a bank, park, bakery, museum, and other

locales, as ways to enlarge a child's knowledge of the

world. As in the case of early speech attempts, parents

help children to confirm or revise their predictions about

how the world works by providing relevant feedback. The

experiences in themselves, as was noted about the books in

reading aloud, are not as valuable as the interaction

between parent and child. It is the conversation about

situations that helps children make connections between

what is already known and new information. This bank of

knowledge that the child is accumulating is part of the

non-visual, or background information so essential to

successful reading (Weaver, 1994).

When children enter school, these additional

environments and resources increase the potential for

learning. The daily experiences and language transactions parents and children share can be augmented by group experiences and language interactions not possible in the home.

Identifying the Problem

Although the best support for continued learning, especially in the area of written language, is through the coordination of home/school efforts, in reality this seldom happens. Teachers understand the nature of learning, that reading is developmental and is a woven mesh of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, it is difficult to find time and the opportunity to talk with parents about the principles that guide reading instruction.

At the same time, parents, who understand so much about facilitating their child's learning about oral language, how print works, and about the world in which they live, often feel powerless in assisting their child in learning to read. There are several reasons for this. Probably the most important one is that society has assigned responsibility for reading instruction to schools. The common perception is that children are "supposed" to learn pre-reading skills in kindergarten and how to read independently in first grade. Some parents are

more than willing to leave the task to the schools because of other commitments, such as work. Others view themselves as incompetent (due to lack of English) to help with this most important and fundamental step in their child's education, and are reluctant to take an active part for fear of impeding their child's progress.

That a common understanding be reached and cooperation between home and school be established is advantageous for three reasons: parents and teachers share common goals; children who lack experiences with print and their world, or whose oral language is underdeveloped, are at a disadvantage in learning to read; and, just as with the development of speech, all children need encouragement, demonstrations, and continuous opportunities to use written language in order to develop their reading potential.

Schools cannot do it all: Children are only in school a few hours of the day (Jewell & Zintz, 1990). Teachers need to take the lead in eliciting parental assistance in helping children learn to read. Most parents will help their children if they understand that they need to do so, and are assisted with information about the most effective ways to support their developing reader (Solomon, 1991). This project is designed to help teachers accomplish this

goal by encouraging parents to define and accept their role in their child's reading development and take part in the Parent Literacy Workshops.

As the young child moves into the school environment, parents can provide a viable bridge between the independent support of parent-to-child and the large group situation of the classroom. At the same time that the child is struggling to adjust to the demands of a new social group, a different environment, and increased academic expectations, there is a drastic reduction in the amount and nature of personal interactions. Parents can lessen the shock by providing the vital continuity between home and school.

By continuing to read to their children, they demonstrate that reading is important, model the behaviors that their beginning reader will need to assume, and continue to contribute to their child's band of knowledge about the world, supporting the learning until their child is ready to read alone. In addition, they build their child's knowledge of print daily through stories and book awareness.

The beginning reader learns about books by interacting with many varieties, in different settings. The child learns about language by hearing the sounds of

language—rhyming passages, nonsense words, narrative works, and samples of different genres and writing styles. This personal reading experience is enhanced by the opportunity to hear the same stories repeatedly. The lap-reading experience is so enriching for children that teachers attempt to duplicate it for students in school by sharing big books and reading in small group or whole class settings (Holdaway, 1979). However, the unique experience of being personally read to by a caring adult can only be approximated in the classroom.

When children begin to read more for themselves, the parent's role expands. Now, along with providing a model of reading, parents can support the child in taking on the role of a reader. Children need to view themselves as readers, and this depends on continuous, successful encounters with text. Readers learn to read by reading. Children get validation along with valuable practice when they read to a caring adult. As in the case of the read-aloud experience, the child's enjoyment as well as his or her comprehension of the text is deepened by the discussion and interaction that takes place during and after the reading.

Children who are not feeling successful or are finding reading difficult may need a different level of

assistance for awhile. Parents can lend additional

motivational support by sharing the reading task with

their child. This can be done by echo reading, where the

parent reads and the child reads along, following the

lead; shared reading, in which participants read alternate

paragraphs or pages; or by any other method that eases the

burden on the beginning reader. Parents are the

translators of print at this stage. The support they lend

will enable their developing reader to assume more and

more of the responsibility for his or her own learning:

about language, about print, and about the world.

Parents who read themselves and make time to read to

their children provide the best model and motivation for

their beginning readers (Cullinan, 1992). They are also

the best equipped for continuing that support throughout

the school years. Parents have a vested interest in their

child's learning, and they are the most able to provide

the individualized, one-on-one assistance that can make

the difference between success and failure in learning to

read.

Teachers who invite parents to become their partners,

both in the classroom and at home, gain invaluable

instructional support. The benefits can be worth the time

needed to discuss reading insights and goals toward

achieving effective collaboration. Children who know their parents are interested in their learning, are not only more successful academically but their confidence and feelings of self-worth are significantly enhanced, which translates into improved behavior in the classroom (Cullinan, 1992).

Parents of the children who have the greatest need of learning support are often the very parents most reluctant to attend school meetings. Therefore, this project will provide literacy information that can be utilized in Parent Literacy Workshops.

Theoretical Orientation

This project was developed upon the following underlying theoretical beliefs: 1) learning to listen, speak, read and write are similar, interrelated, and reciprocal; 2) learning to read is developmental; 3) certain understandings are critical for learning to read but are not necessarily developed in any particular order; 4) children learn to read by engaging in authentic reading and writing activities; 5) demonstrations and sharing are necessary for learning to read; 6) parents and teachers share common motivations and objectives; and 7) coordinating parent and teacher efforts provides the best support for beginning readers.

Learning to read is developmental (Jewell & Zintz, 1990). It has its roots in listening to stories and develops through multiple experiences with print which serve to build a gradual awareness of the purposes of reading and writing. Through these experiences and with the support of others, readers are assisted along their own personal routes to reading independence and the life-long development of competence.

Certain understandings are critical for learning to read. These understandings are not necessarily developed in any particular order, but are simultaneously acquired and refined at individual rates. Some of these understandings are the purposes of reading; the constraints of reading (directionality and alphabetic principle); the conventions of reading (format, organization, and punctuation); the development and use of enabling schemas; and the aesthetics of reading [book language, reader and print interaction] (Weaver, 1994).

Children learn to read by engaging in authentic reading and writing activities (Harste & Burke, 1979). From hearing stories read aloud and having signs and other significant print read to them as they engage in real world experiences with others, children gradually assume a

more active role in reading experiences as they move toward independence.

Demonstrations and sharing are necessary for learning to read (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). Most children come to school competent in oral language and in organizing and assimilating new learning. All have knowledge of the world and of environmental print, and some knowledge about stories and written language as well, depending on the home environment. The foundation is there for the development of written language. However, success depends upon the attention of language-capable adults, just as in the case of speech development.

Parents and teachers share common motivations and objectives. Both want children to learn how to read independently as early as possible in order to increase their likelihood of continuing success in learning. Both want children to enjoy their reading experiences and to continue to develop their capabilities.

Coordinating parent and teacher efforts provides the best support for beginning readers (Jewell & Zintz, 1990). Through these combined efforts, and with common expectations and support at home and in school, children can develop reading and writing skills as naturally and effortlessly as they develop speech (Jewell & Zintz,

1990). This is not to say that they can do it unaided. Both parents and teachers need to provide the experiences and model the behaviors that extend children's explorations and knowledge of oral and written language. Approximations must be recognized and accepted as growth (Routman, 1988). Most important, both parents and teachers need to evaluate the child's strengths and consolidate their efforts to extend learning by expecting and acknowledging improvement as a reader and writer.

During the past decade, there has been increased pressure on schools to return to the "basics." In reading, this translates to teaching children discrete skills for recognizing words. This so called "common sense" approach assumes that once children can recognize the words, comprehension will follow (Weaver, 1994).

Advocates of intensive phonics instruction stress that children need to learn to decode words before they can read and write (Weaver, 1994). Linguistics promoters support the same theory of starting with the parts and working up to whole text. However, their approach to making reading easy is to have children read regularly patterned words, in lists and in controlled texts. This controlled practice would help children intuit patterns

that would aid in decoding text, and they could then gradually move into real books (Weaver, 1994).

The emphasis on starting with recognizing words is also embodied in the "sight words" approach to reading. Children are drilled on about a hundred basic, high-frequency words in the belief that these known words will facilitate successful reading (Weaver, 1994).

Some writers take a more moderate view of requisite strategies for successful reading. Adams (1990) contends that although the primary focus is on making meaning, reading at any level and by any definition is dependent upon a thorough understanding and integration of all cueing systems. Clay (1991) stated that even the most easily understood principle must be brought to children's conscious attention through modeling or direct teaching.

The important thing to remember amid all the controversy is that children learn to read and write by engaging in authentic activities and for their own purposes, and not according to any predetermined and practiced steps.

Reading aloud to children is a factor which makes a difference in success at school. Likewise, children who come from homes where reading aloud takes place have an educational advantage over those who do not. Reading aloud

to their children has been a focus of research for several years and studies of emergent literacy have clearly revealed the importance of this practice (Spreadbury, 1995). "When parents read stories to their children they are creating a safe, warm place for language and literacy learning" (Taylor & Strickland, 1986, p. 5). Reading aloud to children helps them build a positive attitude about books. Children associate books with the love and warmth of their parents reading aloud to them. This fosters the early love of books that is so important to early literacy formation. According to Cullinan (1992), when children share stories with their parents, they build memories about the warmth and joy in their early lives that come back long after the memory of the story is gone.

Moreover, reading aloud to their children is a worthwhile activity that benefits children in many ways. Reading aloud is a shared activity that brings a family together and provides a time when families can learn about each other and share ideas, attitudes and values. During these times, children learn about themselves as part of a family and as part of the world. Reading aloud to children is a social activity that brings pleasure to all those involved. This social activity is important to children's language development. As children interact with their

parents during reading aloud sessions, they learn language
and use their language to learn about the world. Harste
(1990) stated:

> Children learn best in low-risk environments where
> exploration is accepted and current efforts are
> socially supported and understood. Language is a
> social event. Most of what we know about language has
> been learned from being in the presence of others.
> (p. 317)

As children interact with their parents during read-aloud
sessions, they learn language as they share ideas and
feelings. This interaction helps children develop an
understanding of themselves and others.

Reading aloud to children provides a number of
language lessons. Listening to stories is important for
building background knowledge, fostering language
development, developing a sense of story, linking reading
and writing, acquiring word knowledge and vocabulary, and
becoming aware of book language, print awareness and book
handling skills. It also fosters listening comprehension
and word recognition comprehension (Mason, 1990). This
study indicated that listening to a story read aloud by a
parent when a child age three was significantly associated
with oral language ability and knowledge of literacy at

age five and reading comprehension at age seven. Studies

have shown empirically that there is a difference in the

nature of experiences which children have at home.

Some parents view literacy as a source of

entertainment, such as reading a story, but other parents

view literacy as a set of activities, such as reviewing

flash cards. Growing up in a home that fosters the view

that literacy is a source of entertainment has a more

positive impact on emergent literacy skills in the areas

of phonological awareness, knowledge about print, and

narrative competence (Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher,

Truitt, & Munsterman, 1997). Growing up in a home that

fosters a view that literacy is a set of skills to be

learned was not significantly related to literacy

competency.

Literate Home Environment

Because learning to read and write begins early in

life, parents can be encouraged to create home

environments that promote literacy growth. A literate home

environment, one where children observe others in literate

activities, as well as exploring print on their own,

provides children with opportunities to enjoy reading and

writing in an interactive environment. According to

Trelease (1985), the people in the child's home stimulate

the child's interest in reading and writing by answering questions, praising the child's efforts, taking the child to the library, buying books, and writing stories which the child dictates.

A comprehensive review of research found that positive environments for learning to read was determined by four main environmental factors. Firstly, there was an availability and range of printed of materials including books and environmental reading of sign posts, product names, store names, etc. Secondly, reading was modeled by parents and older siblings, as well as reading to the child. Reading was valued as a part of daily living for different purposes such as for entertainment or for information. Thirdly, writing was encouraged at home for a variety of purposes and children had access to paper, pencils, markers, envelopes, and other writing materials. Finally, others in the child's environment encouraged, provided feedback, and answered questions about reading (Spreadbury, 1995).

Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) presented several ways that parents can create a literate environment. Finding a time to read and a comfortable place for reading are two important considerations. Setting a routine time and place for reading can establish the habit of a family's reading

together. A literate environment requires a large stock of appropriate books and magazines. These materials need to be available to all family members and it is important for children to see parents and other family members reading for different purposes.

Modeled behavior is important to learning as children will want to read if they see other family members reading. It is also important for parents and children to talk about what they are reading and connect it with family experiences. By connecting a book to a family experience, such as a family trip, children's knowledge about the world develops. Likewise, parents can help their children share their ideas and feelings about the characters and events in the stories and connect them to their own experiences. According to Strickland and Morrow (1990), this activity is very personal and child centered, which gives more meaning to the child. Likewise, a literate home environment offers children a plethora of opportunities for writing for a variety of purposes. All these studies point to a literate environment which provides children with many opportunities to enjoy reading and writing in the child's most natural setting, the home, as the most important factor in early literacy.

A common finding in research about why some children learn to read without difficulty while others do not, is that children who learn to read easily in school are the same children whose parents have read to them at home. Researchers are not sure if it is the story reading or some other factor that helps children learn to read. Most of the explanations are based on a model of learning in which the story reading serves as a preparation for instruction in reading. For example, children learn to read because their parents model reading or (children learn to read) because they have good feelings about the warmth of story times with their parents.

The book knowledge and knowledge of reading explanation suggests that children learn something about reading from the story reading situation itself. Through many experiences with books, children learn how a book works; books have a beginning, middle, and end that tell about something and make sense. They learn how to locate print in books and observe letter-sound correspondence. Children also learn how to handle books; how to hold books and turn the pages. Schickendanz proposed that children construct knowledge about rules that govern the reading process over time with many experiences with books and

with a closeness with parents during reading aloud

sessions (as cited in Strickland & Morrow, 1990).

<u>Higher Level Thinking</u>

Early research on reading aloud to children focused

on the belief that reading stories to children promotes

reading achievement in school. Recent research has focused

on the language and social interaction between parent and

child during story reading and the effect it has on

literacy development. According to Lennox (1995), social

interactionist theories, especially Vygotsky's, propose

new direction in the study of literacy development in

children. Vygotsky's theory proposed that a child learns

through social interaction with a more knowledgeable

expert.

During a literacy activity at home or school,

children are given support by a parent or teacher until

they can do the task independently. This scaffolding

allows them to learn to read and write. Lennox (1995)

stated, "It is now believed that, not only the presence of

a story time routine, but also the amount of verbal

interaction between parent and child during story reading

influences and shapes early development" (p. 12). Research

indicated that this development comes from the discussion

of the language and ideas of the author and the questions

and comments from the reader and the child. The type and amount of interaction between parent and child during reading aloud are the major contributing factors in literacy development. As children interact with their parents during discussions about stories, they begin to develop their thinking and speaking skills.

The conversations between a child and adult enrich a child's repertoire of concepts and provide children with opportunities to hear new words in meaningful contexts and lead to acquisition of a large oral vocabulary. Taylor and Strickland stated, "There is no doubt that engagement in storybook reading is one of the richest resources for vocabulary development available to children" (1986, p. 42). A large vocabulary enables children to read better. They learn new words as they hear them read aloud in books and as parents talk about them. Children can later draw upon this repertoire of words when they read and write. Story language is different than the everyday language we use. As children listen to fairy tales and hear "Once upon a time" over and over, they will begin to use it in their language as they talk about books and stories and will use it later when they learn to read and write stories on their own. Harste (1990) stated:

By age 3, when asked to read or pretend to read a
book, children start to vary their normal speech to
sound like "book talk." By age 6, children who have
been read to frequently have internalized the
structures of stories in their culture and can
produce many fine stories of their own. (p. 317)

Because story language is different from everyday
language, it is important that children hear different
kinds of stories or genres. Hearing different genres
teaches children the qualities, such as plot, characters,
setting, and book language of those stories. Children
learn what makes a story and how different stories work.
The language in a fairy tale is different than the
language in a nursery thyme or a mystery book. When
children hear fairy tales over and over again, they will
expect to hear those qualities found in fairy tales when
they hear a new fairy tale. They will expect to hear "Once
upon a time" at the beginning and expect certain
characters and events to be in the story. Knowing the
qualities of genres will help children make predictions
when they begin to read. They will have a sense of how the
story should work so their predictions make sense. Mooney
(1990) stated, "Familiarity with knowing how stories work
helps beginning readers develop confidence in becoming

involved in the unfolding of the story line when they hear new stories or assume more of the reader's role for themselves" (p. 22).

Several studies have investigated the interactions of parents and children as they shared books, with parents supporting their children by prompting, providing information, and questioning. These studies found that parents usually engaged in closed questioning, a process wherein children labeled or described various aspects of the stories. They did not make great use of open or probe questions which necessitate higher level thinking, such as exploring attitudes and opinions or elaborating on information (Lennox, 1995). Quality instruction during literacy interactions requires strategies that elicit higher level thinking which scaffolds the process of comprehension (Leseman & Jong, 1998). To engage in higher level thinking parents can think out loud as they are reading a story and ask questions such as, "How could that happen?" or "What do you think will happen next?" or "How do you think he feels?" Parents can help their children make inferences, comparisons and evaluations, as well as see cause and effect relationships, by asking questions during story reading. They can ask questions which have more than one correct answer or questions which require

multiple word answers. As parents talk about the stories, the children can also interact by asking questions, answering questions, and making comments of their own.

Reading Readiness

Children are naturally curious about the world and reading aloud is one way that parents can help their children learn about the world. They can help their children acquire ideas and content in a natural setting by helping them understand new words an concepts by relating it to something they know already. Harste (1990) stated:

> Learning proceeds from the known to the unknown. Comprehension and learning are now seen as a search for patterns that connect, and growth is seen as a search forever wider patterns. Children need to be given opportunities to make language their own by making connections with their lives and background information. In short, there is no better way to begin instruction than in terms of the learner's language and current background experience. (p. 317)

Parent can help their children make connections between books and their own personal experiences by encouraging their children to talk about the illustrations and concepts. These conversations will help children to develop schemata about the world and enable them to bring

their understanding and knowledge of the world to print. These schemata will enable them to bring meaning to the text once they begin reading independently. For example, a child living in the city may have no knowledge of living in the country or on a farm, but when parents read books about farms, children can learn concepts about farm life and animals. When children start reading independently and read a book about farms, they will have an understanding about farm life and because they can draw upon this knowledge base, they can guess the meaning of new words in the book. "If children understand background ideas pertaining to what will be read, it becomes easier to recognize and pronounce new words in print" (Ediger, 1992, p. 3). The best way for children to learn that the purpose of reading is for meaning is by reading to them from the time they are infants. "Reading aloud sends the critical message to children that books have ideas, and that the purpose of reading is to get those ideas" (Bialystok, 1992, p. 12). Listening is related to reading and just as children listen to language to receive a message, children discover that by hearing books read aloud, they are receiving a message.

Although research has shown that reading aloud makes a positive difference in school success, children can also

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play enjoyable learning activities to enhance their reading readiness. It is important that children develop the ability to hear sounds in words. "Hearing and using sounds begins when a child is an infant and it is the beginning of learning to speak, read, and write" (Clinard, 1997, p. 21). There are many activities besides reading aloud to children which parents can share at home with their children to help develop their ability to hear sounds in words. To hear rhyming sounds, parents can read poems and nursery rhymes to their children. Children's songs or poems on cassettes or compact disks from the library or store can be played so that children can sing or recite along. Parents and children can think of words that rhyme or words that start with the same sound.

Parents can play the game "Does It Fit?" wherein the children have to say the word that does not begin or end with the same sound as the other words. Parents and children can read alphabet books and identify the letters in the books. They can play the alphabet guessing game by asking, "I am thinking of something that starts like toy; what is it?" and play alphabet games by naming a favorite food or animal for letters of the alphabet. Parents can buy a set of magnetic letters and spell out words, such as the child's name on the refrigerator. By providing

chalkboards or paper and pencil, parents can encourage

their children to write. It is also important that parents

talk with their children by answering their questions and

explaining things to them. Parents can also draw pictures

with their children and each can tell stories about the

pictures. They can take walks in the neighborhood and talk

about what they see, hear, or touch.

Family Literacy Programs

There are several family literacy programs or

projects that attempt to create more literacy-oriented

homes by fostering a partnership between parents and

children via a home reading program. Many participants in

these programs view literacy learning as a family matter

to be enjoyed and shared. The intent of these programs is

to enhance the extent to which parents become involved in

their children's literacy formation and education. They

promote changes in how parents interact with their

children. A year-long parent-child reading project for

four year olds was implemented in an urban child-parent

center classroom in Chicago. The purpose of the project

was to emphasize the importance of reading aloud to

children as well as providing opportunities for increased

frequencies or reading aloud (Otto & Johnson, 1994). Many

positive outcomes were observed during this project

including the value of learning and reading. Subsequently, there was an increase in the children's interest in reading. They enjoyed reading books to themselves as well as to each other and more children went to the library during independent work time. There was an increase in the children's listening skills which was noticed during class story times. Children's vocabulary increased and they used word concepts that were found in their storybooks.

The project of a set of guides developed to help teachers provide opportunities for parents and children to have fun doing things together that are suitable at a child's stage of development. The guides include a message to parents, read-aloud selections, developmentally appropriate activities for parents to do with their children and a "Sunshine Gram" to promote positive communication with families. The field-test experience showed that most families welcomed the guides and many parents commented on the enjoyment shared by their families using the guides as well as involving themselves in the schooling of their children. Likewise, teachers noticed positive changes in students involved in the program.

The reading program was created to get children reading more at home and to get parents involved in

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reading with their children. This school-home literacy

program is a backpack program that sends children home

with three books. "In selecting books careful

consideration is given to providing books that will

initiate positive parent-child interactions and meet

parent-child needs" (Richgels & Wold, 1998, p. 20). The

best choices are books that enhance conversations between

parents and children. The books are categorized according

to ease of reading and genre. There are books for a child

to read by himself, to read with a parent, and for the

parent to read to the child. The backpacks include a

letter to parents which includes instructions and

suggestions for talking about the books and using the

journal, response journals, writing and drawing materials,

and hand puppets. Teachers demonstrate how to use the

backpacks so that students understand how they work.

Demonstration sessions include talking about caring for

the backpacks, deciding how to use the three books in the

backpack, and reading strategies. The Three for the Road

program has been very successful in its first four years

of use in one elementary school (Richgels & Wold, 1998).

These programs demonstrate that educators and parents can

form a successful partnership to involve parents in their

children's education.

All parents need to foster their children's early literacy formation by engaging in literate activities, especially reading aloud to their children. Because reading aloud is an enjoyable activity and has value in children's learning, educators can promote a home-school partnership to encourage this activity. Practical advice can be offered to parents on how to read effectively to their children on a regular basis. By making reading aloud at home a priority, parents and educators can work together to enhance children's early literacy formation and success in school.

Parental/Community/Involvement

With class size increasing in most schools, children are getting less and less individual time with their classroom teacher. This increased class size makes it even more difficult for first through third grade students to attain the goal of literacy. Children in the 1st-3rd grade classroom are not only focusing on becoming literate, but are learning many school and social skills that become a large focus for the young student entering a classroom for the first time. Because social and schools skills are also being introduced and practiced, caring and helpful adults in the classroom provide needed individual attention to young students.

Therefore, parents and community volunteers have become a valuable resource in the elementary classroom. According to Hewison, "Parental help leads to improved reading performance" (1985, p. 48). Flood and Lapp (1995) stated, "Every parent benefits from time spent in a classroom. When they participate in their children's education, they acquire insights about their children, the culture of their peers, and the school curriculum that help them to see relationships between their parenting practices and classroom practices" (p. 614). Parents are encouraged to tutor individual children at school. They are good at giving students extra attention, praise, and encouragement. Parent provide a valuable resource for both students and teachers (Flood & Lapp, 1995).

Parent involvement is particularly important in natural literacy because of the emphasis on the meaningfulness and functionality of reading and its goal of making lifelong readers. A strong home connection is a natural, necessary element of this approach (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990).

Other studies also point to the positive effects parents/volunteers can play in supporting readers. Parent involvement has become an accepted approach to ending reading failure (Hewison, 1985). "Effective family/school

partnerships may very well be essential for helping more students reach the ambitious education goals that the nation has set for the year 2000" (Solomon, 1991, p. 359). "Research on parental involvement consistently shows that parents can make a difference in the quality of their children's education if districts and schools enable them to become involved in a variety of ways" (p. 360).

Reading Strategies

The main focus of the Parent Literacy Workshops will be to introduce literacy strategies to parents that support readers in the classroom and at home. Strategies are ideas, questions, and plans that help a reader make meaning from print. Strategies are often confused with "work attack skills," or phonics. Strategies are the thoughtful plans or operation readers use while involved in the reading process; these plans are activated, adjusted, and modified for each new reading situation (Routman, 1991).

The major difference between a "skill" and a "strategy" is the coordinating control of a human mind operating in purposeful, predictive, and self-correcting ways. The major difference, then, between "skills teaching" and "strategy teaching" concerns the presence of

absence of self-direction on the part of the learner. In skills teaching the teacher tells the learner what to do and then "corrects" or "marks" the response. In strategy teaching the teacher induces the learner to behave in an appropriate way and encourages the learner to confirm or correct his own responses (Routman, 1991). The good reader develops personal strategies that use all three major cueing systems (semantic, syntactic and graphophonic) to make sense of print. These readers develop a personal awareness of the strategies they use during different situations.

Active Involvement

Lennox stated, "Children build their knowledge of print and their strategies for reading and writing from their independent exploration of the world of print, from interaction with literate adults and peers, and from observations involved in literacy activities" (1995, p. 12). Parents can create a literate environment for their children irregardless of parents' economic or educational background. According to True and Ehda (1980), children's academic achievement appears to be more strongly related to their parents' level of involvement that to their level of education or income.

Paired Reading

Paired reading begins with a child selecting a book or other reading material she would like to read. The parent or volunteer reads the text simultaneously with the child. The adult paces their reading of the text to fit the child's. The child does not echo what the parent or volunteer is reading, but they read it together. When the child feels ready to read the text alone, she gives the adult an agreed-upon signal. The reading cycle moves from duet to solo and back to duet/solo based on the child's comfort level.

Paired reading seems to be more successful than reading aloud with the parent as listener. The child may feel pressure to perform as a reader and may feel unable to carry out the task competently and independently. Listening to a child read does not demonstrate to the child that reading is an event in which meaning is interactively and socially constructed. The focus of reading then becomes a solitary task (Hayden, 1995).

This is a compelling reason to equip parents and volunteers with strategies to help the young reader that reaffirms reading as a meaning making activity. When parents and volunteers are empowered with strategies and

resources, they are then able to support learning strategies that are similar to those in the classroom.

Toomey reviewed over 40 studies of parents hearing their children read at home. These studies indicated this practice may not result in literacy gains, particularly for the at-risk reader, unless parents have received some training in specific procedures to assist their children during the reading sessions. This indicates that low-competence students may need more than a listening parent to improve their reading abilities (as cited in Hayden, 1995).

> Based on the theoretical framework that maintains that parents scaffold their children's literacy development by reading to them and supported by the research that addresses the centrality of meaning in the reading process, the strategies contained within the paired reading approach encourage less able readers to move from supportive (reading with parent) to independent reading as parents and children share texts together over a relatively short period of time. (Hayden, 1995, p. 335)

Parents and volunteers need to create an environment where readers are supported so they can make meaning from print.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is another natural literacy strategy
that helps invite children to become readers. During
shared reading an adult and a child or group of children
spend unhurried and uninterrupted time viewing, reading
and sharing a book together. Children are able to act and
be seen as readers as they participate in and out of
reading while the adult ensures that the author's message
and the flow of meaning are maintained throughout the book
(Mooney, 1994). During the first reading of a book in
shared reading, the aim is to help children think like an
author and act like a reader. Children unfold the author's
message and develop confidence in how the text works that
allow them to read along with you (Mooney, 1994).

Mooney stated many of the benefits of shared reading
with children of any age, but especially in the early
stages of their reading and writing development. Shared
reading provides opportunities to:

1.   create a welcoming and supportive climate which
     encourage the children to participate in
     supported reading.

2.   acknowledge the children's contributions as
     those of reader and writers.

3. provide opportunities for children to
    participate in a variety of ways.

4. show the roles of author, illustrator and reader
    in creating and recreating meaning.

5. model strategies that children may soon require
    in guided and independent reading.

6. introduce an increased range of forms of writing
    and illustrative styles in a supportive setting
    and without overt expectations.

7. draw children into the reading through the
    intrigue, fun and excitement of the book.

8. introduce new, memorable and more complex
    language.

9. increase familiarity with book language through
    texts beyond the children's level of independent
    reading.

10. model fluent, expressive reading that creates
    interest and invites participation.

11. demonstrate how readers decide the most
    appropriate response to a text. (1994, p. 71)

Discussion and comments during shared reading can
demonstrate predictive and confirming strategies a reader
uses to maintain the flow of the text. Examples of

open-ended questions that encourage children to make

meaning from their reading are as follows:

1.   I wonder how can get out of this predicament?

2.   I hope the next page will tell me how...

3.   I was really surprised when

4.   Was that how you expected it to happen?

5.   That was an unusual and surprising ending,

       wasn't it? What else could the author have done?

"Most questions and discussion starters at the end of

the reading should engender thought or discussion with the

group rather than "an answer" for you. You are modeling

how reader think rather than inviting a response" (Mooney,

1994, p. 72).

Contextual Reading Strategies

Readers need to be able to use a variety of specific

strategies or cues to use when they come to word when

reading and "get stuck." Newman and Church (1990)

explained that everyone uses graphophonic clues

(symbol/sound) when reading but these are not the only

clues good readers use. Readers use a variety of other

language cues: cues about meaning (syntactic cues), and

pictorial cues that bring general knowledge about the

subject into play.

According to Routman,

When readers get stuck, the teacher needs to

help them to help themselves by providing prompts.

Always the message to the child is, 'How can you help

yourself?' The child then learns that he is

responsible for doing the reading work and that the

teacher will help him when necessary. (1991, p. 42)

Routman goes on to state specific strategies that a

teacher or parent can use when a child comes to an unknown

word and gets stuck:

1)   Remind the reader to start the sentence again.

      ("Try it again.")

2)   Ask the reader if what he just said made sense.

      "Does that make sense?" (semantics) "Does that

      sound right?" (structure)

3)   Tell the reader to skip the word and read on to

      the end of the sentence. "Now, what is the

      word?"

4)   Encourage the reader to take an educated guess.

      "What do you think it could be?"

5)   Remind the reader to take a careful look at the

      word. ("Could it be...?" "What would you expect

      to see at the beginning of...?" "What do you see

      here?")

6)   Ask if he can find the word on a previous page

["Where else did you see that word?"] (p. 42).

Natural literacy teachers do teach symbol/sound correspondence but not as something separate from actual reading and writing. Teachers might offer students some symbol/sound hints at an appropriate moment after they have successfully figured out an unfamiliar word.

For children to become literate, many need individual attention from supportive adults. Parents and volunteers desperately need ideas and strategies to help support beginning readers in the process of obtaining meaning from print. When parents and volunteers are empowered with strategies, they are then able to support reading in the classroom. These Parent Literacy Workshops will be a beginning step in bridging the gap, so parents and volunteers can support the classroom teacher in the process of helping children become lifelong readers.

Practical Tips for Reading Aloud

Parents reading aloud to their children is the one factor which makes a difference in their reading success at school. By reading aloud parents can help their children enjoy and value books and reading. Here are some ideas for making reading aloud a family tradition in the home.

1. Parents should begin reading to the child as soon as possible, and find time to read with the child everyday.

2. Provide reading materials for all family members. Reading materials can be obtained through school book clubs, public and school libraries, used book stores, or garage sales. Swap books with family and friends. Get the child his/her own library card and go to the library regularly.

3. Let the child see parents enjoying reading. Parents are the child's best role model for reading. The child will value reading if parents do.

4. Connect read alouds to the child's personal experiences or to family experiences. Read about things that the child or family has experienced or will be experiencing.

5. Talk about what is read to help the child develop language thinking skills. Talk about the ideas in books and listen to the child's comments. While reading, ask questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" Discuss whether or not the child likes the book.

6. When reading a book with the child:

    a. Announce the name of the book and the author and the illustrator.

    b. Talk about the cover and ask "What do you think this story is going to be about?"

    c. Talk about the parts of a book.

    d. Let the child hold the book and turn the pages.

    e. Take time reading and allow the child to look and talk about the pictures.

    f. Read with expression. Change the tone of voice to fit the characters.

    g. Point to the words while reading.

7. Turn off the television and read!

Parent and Volunteer Workshops

Parent Literacy Workshops are some of the ways schools can build stronger partnerships between parents and teachers so that children's learning can take place both at home and in the classroom.

According to Solomon (1991), the State of California has adopted a policy on parent involvement which states that programs should be designed to the following:

1. help parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support learning;

2. provide parents with the knowledge of techniques designed to assist children in learning at home;

3. provide access to and coordinate community and support services for children and families;

4. promote clear tow-way communication between the school and the family regarding school programs and children's progress;

5. involve parents, after appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at school; and

6. support parents as decision makers and develop their leadership in governance, advisory and advocacy roles. (p. 361)

Parents can be more involved in their own child's education as well as helping other children in the classroom when parent involvement programs are linked to support reading strategies which reinforce learning in the classroom and at home.

Rationale for Volunteers

Volunteers can be a valuable tool for improving the education of children. Butler and Clay (1987) claimed, "Schools are not able to provide teaching on a one-on-one basis. ...Most learning has to be in a group situation"

(p. 37). Parent volunteers help students by providing more
individual attention and showing the students that adults
do care about schools and the children who are in them
(True & Ehda, 1980). Bailey (1992) viewed the effective
use of volunteers to be one of the few low-cost ways to
give children individualized instruction. Powell (1986)
stated that trained parent volunteers are the answer to
raising adult/child ratios in the classroom. Ellenzweig
(1990) claimed that the introduction of extra adults in
the process of beginning literacy is a key expedient in
accommodating varying rates of development and individual
differences in learning style.

Dulaney (1987) noted that volunteer support often
dwindles if there are only one or two ways for people to
participate. She suggested using volunteers for everything
from making learning materials to tutoring students and
staffing homework hotlines. Powell (1986) included
tutoring as one of the many areas in which volunteers can
serve.

Why are volunteers so frequently needed to tutor or
work one-on-one with students? Butler and Clay (1987)
stated that, "Well-prepared children seldom fail to learn
to read but 'ill-equipped' children tend to go from bad to
worse" (p. 37). Bailey (1992) supported the use of

well-trained volunteers to cope with the influx of students who arrive at school unprepared to learn.

It is also important to realize that parents can feel helpless and left out from everyday school life (Russell, 1989). Parents who become involved as a volunteer at school have the opportunity to see the larger picture of the educational system. This curbs many complaints or concerns about their child's education (Powell, 1986). The parents and the school can then build a strong alliance to promote the growth and education of the children.

Volunteer Programs

Jamer (1961) viewed the integration of volunteers into the school as a tremendous opportunity to utilize the human resources of the community. All of these resources need to be organized in order to be efficient. Volunteer programs can be developed at the classroom, school or district level. Dulaney (1987) stated that,

Volunteer programs that involve the entire school system—supported by teachers, principals, central office executives, and school board members—are most effective because such programs create a climate of volunteerism and make the most efficient use of training. But where a system wide program is not

possible, a school or even a classroom program is a
good substitute. (p. 49)

Volunteer programs require planning. They need to
begin with an assessment of needs and the setting of goals
(Dulaney, 1987). True and Ehda (1980) stress the
importance of planning areas for volunteers to work in
before recruiting them. Specific requests for jobs that
need to be performed are more effective in drawing
volunteers than a general call for help by the teacher.
Many school sites set up a Very Important Parents (VIP)
room for volunteers to work in.

Volunteers need to feel that they play an important
and welcome role in the educational process. Russell
(1989) found that volunteers who are made to feel
welcomed, needed, and invited participated in the
educational development of their children in the school.
Parents need to feel that they are an integral part of the
educational system in order to encourage their volunteer
service (Russell, 1989). Fredericks and Rasinski (1990)
found that volunteers that are made to feel comfortable
with the reading program will be more willing to
participate and contribute to the program. True and Ehda
(1980) credited the attitude of the principal and teachers
as a big factor in getting parents to volunteer. If the

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staff and administration are enthusiastic about having volunteers, then they will find eager volunteers.

No matter what the task or area of help the volunteer is to participate in, it is to the advantage of the teacher, the volunteer and the students to provide training in advance. Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) listed training as one of the five factors vital to the success of any volunteer program. True and Ehda (1980) stressed the need to provide volunteers with specific training for the tasks they will be performing. It would certainly promote a pleasant working relationship to provide the training for volunteers so they would be successful in their service to the school.

With a variety of areas for volunteers to serve in, it is important that they work where they are most comfortable and most beneficial (Bailey, 1992). Volunteers that desire to work with students need to be actively involved in that capacity. Because children are spontaneous, flexible, and variable, it is important that volunteers engage in activities in which children are empowered to make educational decisions relating to the moment. They need to feel that they are active participants in the learning process as opposed to passive

followers. From Russell's (1989) perspective parent volunteers should be able to

> choose or make materials when tutoring small groups or individuals, decide when the activity was mastered or should be changed, and select materials for the next lesson. ...parent volunteers should be allowed to use their own judgement in performing the tasks entrusted to them. (p. 40)

Working with parent volunteers can be an awkward situation. Teachers do not always know how to effectively use volunteers or how to handle problems. Bailey (1992) found that volunteers thought teachers should be trained to use volunteers to their fullest potential. Bailey believed that establishing a positive teacher-volunteer team required the teacher and volunteer to become acquainted before the volunteer began working in the classroom. She also thought that it was important for the teacher to have work planned in advance for the volunteer. This would avoid leaving volunteers with the feeling that they had wasted time by sitting around and waiting for a job to do.

A final phase of any volunteer program is showing volunteers that they are valued and appreciated. One important way to show volunteers that they are appreciated

is to value their input and opinions. One can also give an informal luncheon for teachers' and volunteers to meet and offer ideas, make suggestions for improving the program and to present problems for discussion. Dulaney (1987) gave a list of ideas such as recognizing a Volunteer of the Month, teachers making time to talk with volunteers as colleagues in education when students were not present, and even inviting volunteers to staff in-service meetings that are relevant to the work the volunteer is performing.

Volunteer Training

The importance of training volunteers was stressed many times throughout the literature reviewed. It was clearly a need that surfaced in every volunteer program. Parents who are volunteering their time need to be clued in on relevant information that will help them to be successful in their service as well as to able function as knowledgeable, responsible adults on the campus.

It is important to lay a foundation for the use of volunteers in the classroom during the earliest training experience. All participants, whether parent or teacher, needs to understand what their role in the classroom is. Dulaney (1987) stated that "the school is responsible for managing the curriculum and ensuring that everyday school activities take their normal course. Parent involvement

supports, but does not interrupt, the school program,
student learning and the teacher's role and
responsibilities." A teacher must not turn over his/her
role or responsibilities to a volunteer.

A volunteer handbook should be developed. This is a
time to explain the philosophy of the classroom, school
policies and discipline techniques, and the expectations
of the volunteer and the teacher as they relate to the
goals and objectives of the volunteer program. True and
Ehda (1980) included the need to review discipline
policies as part of the training of volunteers and to
emphasize the importance of consistency and support for
disciplinary actions taken by another adult in the
classroom.

True and Ehda (1980) recommended five formal training
sessions throughout the year that could also be considered
as support for the volunteer. Subsequent sessions include
volunteer feedback on experiences, training on dealing
with specific children, and a discussion of the
development in the children observed throughout the year.

Training should be presented by the teacher,
according to True and Ehda (1980), and should be held in
the classroom. It is important for the teacher to learn

the strengths of the volunteer, as well as any special talents or specific skills they may have (Haley, 1985).

The factor of confidentiality in the context of parent volunteers working with students in the classroom setting was brought up as an essential area to be included in a volunteer training program (True & Ehda, 1980). It was presented that most parents would not like to overhear their child being discussed by a parent volunteer at the supermarket.

In reviewing the effectiveness of training, Powell (1986) stated that the key to volunteers' retention of a training session was to get them involved with the children as much and as soon as possible. Reviewing often gives volunteers immediate support as well as the opportunity to clarify any concerns they experienced.

Powell (1986) recommended giving parents the opportunity to ask questions on information they have been given. This helped volunteers to gain clarity on the issues. They also recommended that volunteers practice skills under guidance and in cooperation with others.

When parent volunteers are working with children in literacy acquisition, as opposed to performing clerical work, they will be making decisions on what to say, how to proceed, and how to best support students. These are the

same sort of decisions that a teacher makes during literacy interactions with students. This level of involvement was found to require a support system for the volunteers. True and Ehda (1980) built support into their subsequent training sessions as mentioned earlier. Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) found that a support system needed to be provided as part of a volunteer training program. Volunteers need to feel that they are working with professionals, and that they have the freedom to express concerns or ask questions about the work they are undertaking. Rasinski & Fredericks (1991) observed that parents can and should be informed participants and decision markers in any parent reading program. He believed that teachers and parents should talk about the challenges and problems presented by the reading program in a classroom. This would enable parents to be better prepared to provide support for literacy growth in the classroom.

Supporting Literacy Acquisition

Once children have mastered oral communication, the next step in the natural progression of communication is the acquisition of literacy. Children have learned how to communicate orally and now are looking toward learning to communicate with written language. Therefore the support

of literacy acquisition actually begins with the support

of oral language development. Butler and Clay (1987)

stated that "Many of the activities that prepare children

to read involve talking. ...As children gain experience in

expressing themselves they gain the kind of control over

words that helps them to anticipate and understand the

language of books" (p. 35). Teale and Sulzby (1989) noted

that children's oral language proficiency is related to

their growth in reading and writing. Macfarlane (1994)

found that small children learn best while playing rather

than being formally "instructed," and suggested that

parents involve their children in lots of day-to-day

activities and conversations to help develop literacy.

According to Mooney (1990) a child's oral language skills

are the foundation on which other literacy skills are

built. Some of their suggestions for encouraging oral

language development were the use of puppets and the

sharing of words and motions to finger plays, songs and

poems.

In addition to supporting literacy acquisition with

oral language development, it is important to provide a

literate environment for the child. Children who

experienced a literate environment at home during their

preschool years were found to be better prepared for

acquiring literacy. Strickland and Taylor (1989) noted that children who come from homes where storybook reading takes place are more likely to read before they are given formal instruction. Even those who are not already reading before formal reading instruction, are more likely to learn to read easily when they do begin instruction. Allison and Watson (1994) found that the earlier parents began reading to their children, the higher the child's emergent reading level was at the end of kindergarten. They considered a child's history of exposure to literacy building events before receiving formal instruction as possibly the most important consideration in learning to read. The experience of reading to a child before formal literacy instruction was viewed as so important that they extended the challenge to early childhood educators to read individually to those students who are not read to at home.

Literacy acquisition seems to be a problem for many children and young adults in America today. Literacy learning begins early in the first years of a child's life. Macfarlane (1994) believed that, parents are the major influence in a child's development as a reader. He believed many children come to school without pre-reading activities: exposure to oral language, the ability to use

coherent sentences, and question the meaning of poems, songs, and stories. Some of these children will remain reading cripples through the remainder of their schooling because of this lack of verbal ability.

Parent/Child Activities. Seven skills are identified that will help children be ready to read. Simple activities are provided for parents of kindergarteners to help a child develop and reinforce the following skills: coordination; visual motor control; visual perception; visual memory; auditory perception; auditory memory; and oral language production.

Summary

Given the existing research, it is clear that students' perceptions, the classroom context, and the use of literature can positively influence students' engagement with literacy. One objective of the previously discussed classroom interventions is to provide opportunities that increase intrinsic motivation, improve students' conceptual understanding of material, teach higher level cognitive strategies, and provide positive social situations for ELL students in any literacy program.

Parents are children's first teachers and, as such, are natural partners with classroom teachers in facilitating their children's learning. When a child enters school, parents can continue to provide the modeling and motivation for learning to read by visibly engaging in reading. They can continue to expand their child's understanding of the world by treating each new experience or activity as a learning opportunity. They can build their child's knowledge base—concepts, language, stories—by continuing to read aloud from material too difficult for the child to manage alone. They can talk about what is read and help their child make personal connections as a way of increasing both understanding and enjoyment or reading. Parents foster their beginning reader's development by providing appropriate support, both emotional and in terms of what their child is trying to do as a reader and writer.

However, the ideal situation of home-school support for the learner is difficult to achieve. Teachers have little time to initiate contacts with parents to share their teaching philosophy or to solicit explicit help in reinforcing classroom learning. Many parents, for various reason, are hesitant to provide more than general

assistance to further what they may perceive as the teachers goals for their child.

The theoretical beliefs behind this project are as follows: learning to listen, speak, read and write are similar, interrelated and reciprocal; learning to read is developmental; certain understandings are critical for learning to read abut these are not necessarily developed in any particular order; children learn to read by engaging in authentic reading and writing activities; demonstrations and sharing are necessary for learning to read; parents and teachers share common motivations and objectives; and, coordinating parent and teacher efforts provides the best support for beginning readers.

Because coordination of parent and teacher efforts provides the best support for beginning readers, lesson plans for six Parent Literacy Workshops are included in Appendix A.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Model for Parent Literacy Workshops

The purpose of this project is to create a
literacy-rich learning environment, both at home and in
school, in which English learners can investigate and
explore new ideas, develop critical thinking skills,
improve overall reading ability, and promote life-long
learning. To this end, the project provides a model of a
six-part parent workshop for developing a literacy program
which promotes such an engaging and motivating
environment.

The following model and table addresses the above two
issues. First, the model represents the instructional
program for parents that is recommended here. Second, the
table provides the opportunity for teachers to focus on
the key points needed to create an engaging and motivating
environment both at home and in school.

Description of the Model

Parent workshops offer a structure that promotes
increased parent involvement in their child's education,
not a parenting curriculum. In these workshops, parents,
teachers, and school support staff work together for the

betterment of children and their families. The composition
of the workshop group varies, but on average 15 to 20
parents will participate at any given time. Workshop
participants help set the agendas, rely on the group as a
resource, and reach into their individual and collective
experiences as a source of strength and problem solving.

Each parent workshop generally lasts two and a half
hours and includes a mixture of experimental activities,
shared read alouds, teacher demonstrations, small group
work, and open discussions with specific attention to what
parents can do at home to support what their children are
learning in school. These workshops can be successful
because

1)   the groups sees parents as equals,

2)   everyone is advocating for children, and

3)   the groups does things instead of just talking
       about them.

The program for parents that focuses on motivating
emergent literacy in English is represented in the model
Parent Literacy Workshops (see Table 2). This model shows
four key elements, which work together to facilitate a
motivating learning environment involving teachers,
parents, and students. Collectively, these four key
elements address all the stages of the Parent Literacy

Table 2. Elements of Parent Literacy Workshops

Elements of Parent Literacy Workshops	Lesson Components
Empowering Parents	Warm-up/Feedback
	Review of Reading Techniques
Reading Techniques	Teacher Demonstration
	Material Distribution
Guided Practice	Guided Practice
	Review of Daily Lesson
Closure	Assessment/Closure

Workshops. Instruction begins with empowering parents, then as parents are ready, proceeds to reading methods and parent training, and finally ends with closure. Each of these four key elements used in the Parent Literacy Workshops build on the others in order to educate parents on the importance in their child's education, starting in the primary grades.

Components of the Model

The approaches to parent training presented here represent current research findings, primarily rationalist views on parent education. They are consistent with whole language philosophy, research on parent involvement, and the importance of volunteers in the classroom.

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Empowering parents is the means of educating parents of their legal rights and obligations when it comes to their child's education. Volunteering in the classroom, reading at home daily, and getting involved at the school site will be focused upon in detail by both the teacher and the parents at the beginning of every Parent Literacy Workshops. Through open group discussions, the teacher can provide support and background knowledge that parents need to build their confidence and truly empower themselves.

Parent Literacy Workshops provide parents with the necessary background knowledge to motivate their child when it comes to literacy and school in general. Group discussions, teacher demonstrations, semi-structured observations, and formative evaluations will all help the teacher guide parents in the right direction. Through this approach, parents build their confidence when it comes to the role they play in their child's education.

Designed for parents of primary aged school children, the Parent Literacy Workshops challenge parents to learn basic reading methodology and put it into practice in small groups at the workshops, at home when working with their child, and in the classroom when volunteering. Learning strategies and higher order thinking skills are taught to parents to use at home. The focus is on content

taught in the academic curriculum and oral language skills. Parents can leave the workshops with experience, and offer instruction that can provide their child with a motivating literacy environment.

Application of the Model

The Parent Literacy Workshops model represents a program to be applied in a series of six evening workshops in which 15 to 20 parents develop the necessary skills to help their child at home develop into a motivated life-long learner. A second function of the model is to provide a clear picture for teachers as to how this program educates parents on ways to motivate emergent readers when it comes to literacy (see Table 3).

Use of this program at any given school site begins with an informal discussion on empowering parents and what that involves. The teacher can take notes throughout the discussion, to create lectures and demonstrations that focus on the parents' needs and wants.

Table 3. A Model of Parent Literacy Training

EMPOWERING PARENTS

Volunteer in the classroom	➢ Ask about the curriculum ➢ Meet with the teacher weekly ➢ Volunteer often ➢ Work with all students
Read at home daily	➢ Parents set the example ➢ Stick to a schedule ➢ Follow the rule of three ➢ Stress high expectations
Getting involved	➢ PTA (Parent/Teacher Association) meetings ➢ SSC (School Site Council) meetings ➢ ELAC (English Language Advisory Committee) ➢ District Parenting classes

READING METHODS

Guided Reading	➢ Teacher/Parent led ➢ New skills and sight words are taught in small groups
Shared Reading	➢ Teacher/Parent take turns reading with the child/children in either small or large group settings ➢ Child models after the Teacher/Parent reads
Read Aloud	➢ Teacher/Parent reading to child/children for pleasure ➢ Child selects the book

PARENT TRAINING

Paired and small group practice	➢ Parents are split up to work on new skills in groups
Observations by the teacher	➢ Teacher walks around observing and answering questions
Remodel skills when necessary	➢ Teacher can demonstrate for the Parents difficult concepts
Review	➢ Connect new skills with the past lessons

CLOSURE

Review	➢ Review new skills taught at the workshop ➢ Connect new skills to past lessons ➢ Teacher can provide Sample mini lessons for Parents to try at home
Take home materials	➢ Homework assigned ➢ Journals provided for reflection ➢ Instructional supplies available

Once the informal discussions have taken place, parents can be placed in small groups of three to five people. Every workshop allows parents to break into their small groups and work together to perfect the reading methods taught to them by the teacher. It is important to note that membership on these groups is flexible and will change from workshop to workshop.

The model itself is an important element for presenting the Parent Literacy Workshops to parents. Augmenting a purely verbal presentation, it provides a picture that aids teachers in seeing the four key elements that must be addressed at every workshop. The model presents a process which provides practical strategies for parents to assist and motivate their child at home and in school.

Description of the Table

Table 3 provides headings for the key elements, which include empowering parents, reading methods, parent training, and closure time. Under the key elements, subheadings have been provided to better define these elements for the teacher. To the right side of each subheading are the major points that will be taught throughout the workshops. These headings, subheadings, and

major points allow teachers to better understand the model as they teach the workshops.

Empowering Parents

The key elements that will be discussed about empowering parents are volunteering in the classroom, reading at home daily, and getting involved at the school site, as well as at home. Key points will be the focus of the opening group discussions at every workshop. The teacher will encourage parents to ask questions about the grade level curriculum, how to communicate with their child's teacher on a weekly basis, volunteering in the classroom, and the rules about working with other children while volunteering.

Reading Methods

The key elements of reading methods that will be discussed are guided reading, shared reading, and read alouds. These key points will be the focus of the teacher demonstrations. The teacher will demonstrate a particular reading strategy at every workshop. For further explanation, when necessary parents will be encouraged to ask questions on the new skills taught. Small groups of three to five parents will gather together after the teacher demonstration to practice the new skills on one another, before attempting the lesson at home with their

child. The key points the teacher will focus on will be the literacy skills needed to motivate children, sight words and the methodology to teach the words to children, and allowing children the freedom of choice when it comes to choosing the book.

Parent Training

The key elements of parent training that will be utilized are as follows: paired and small group practice after every teacher demonstration, formal and informal observations by the teacher while group work is in progress, the remodeling of skills when necessary, and a daily review to further ensure understanding of the reading methodology and new literacy skills taught. Key points will be reinforced when parents split into small groups to work on new skills. This is when the teacher has the opportunity to walk around the classroom to observe the group interaction and dynamics of the class setting as a whole. If a particular group of parents are struggling with a new skill or concept, the teacher can step in and demonstrate the lesson in greater detail or in another fashion. The review time after each parent training session can be utilized by the parents to check for comprehension of the new skills and concepts just

acquired, for the teacher to conduct a semi-informal evaluation on the parents.

Closure Time

The key elements about closure time are a complete review of the workshop and how parents can properly utilize the take-home materials with their child. The key elements of closure time are for the parents to review the new skills taught, and to connect the new skills to past lessons. This is a time for the teacher to provide sample mini-lessons to be tried at home with their children, and for homework to be assigned.

Features of the Instructional Program

"Features of the Instructional Program" refers to how the curriculum is administered. An empiricist's view is that the curriculum determines the instructional needs for the parents. All parents are considered to learn in the same way and therefore it is not important to consider individual needs and differences. Learning skills through drill and practice and focus on the mechanics of each lesson are important features of this approach. For the rationalist, learning is unique to each individual and instruction should be based on the individual parent's needs. Teacher observations, structured evaluations,

shared experience activities, and a focus on meaning, are all important features of the instructional program for the Parent Literacy Workshops.

Goal of the Instruction

The Parent Literacy Workshops is based on the concept of literacy engagement. Literacy engagement occurs when students believe in their ability, are highly interested in literacy tasks, use multiple learning and thinking strategies, expect success, and demonstrate involvement in the learning process. One reason for this project is the recognition that both a child's ability and desire to read are fundamental components of their academic experience. In addition, the concern for affective factors (e.g., desire, interest and attitude) in reading instruction and practice has also fueled an interest for research on literacy motivation.

Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher has special importance because the teacher's role also determines the role of the parents as learners. According to the empiricist position, it is the teacher who plans and sets the goals of the Parent Literacy Workshops. The parent's role is to remain passive and to receive the instruction as dictated by the teacher. The teacher is the director of instruction. In

the rationalist position, both the teacher and the parents
work together to plan and set goals for the workshops. The
parents take an active role in determining what is taught
and learned. The teacher becomes merely a facilitator of
instruction.

Goals and Limitations

Goals

This project is designed to educate parents about the
importance of reading aloud and to encourage them to read
aloud to their children. Because the Parent Literacy
Workshops provide information and suggestions as well as a
model of read-aloud session, they can empower parents to
make an active role in the reading development to their
children. Children who have been read to at home will come
to school more prepared for formal reading instruction.
The reading workshops will be parent-friendly so that it
is easy for parents to comprehend. A collection of
brochures of parent tips that reinforce the information
provided in the workshops will be provided in both English
and Spanish. A bibliography of children's books will also
be provided. Another goal is to present the parent
workshop curriculum guide at a parent education meeting

and keep the guide in the school library for parents to check out at their convenience.

This project develops six school-wide, Parent Literacy Workshops for parents with children in the primary classrooms, where a strategic literacy philosophy will be shared and practiced in a fun, non-threatening environment. Classroom volunteers will be equipped with strategies that help support beginning readers in the classroom. Classroom volunteers can then become partners with the teacher to help students develop a love for reading and become lifelong readers.

Volunteers want to become effective partners in helping children become literate. To be effective, they must share and contribute to the philosophical climate in the classroom. When strategies used in the classroom are shared with the volunteers, they begin to understand and support the literacy efforts in the classroom.

This project is designed to help classroom volunteers become familiar with philosophy of balanced literacy and how to help implement it in the classroom to promote literacy acquisition of all the students. Parents who come to volunteer their time in the classroom want to be effective in their work and make a positive impact. The best way to ensure this is to share the background

philosophy that drives the classroom literacy program and to provide them with techniques for working with students.

Objectives

In planning the content and purpose of the guide the following objectives were determined.

1. Provide a resource for parents to help their children at home;

2. Encourage parents to read aloud to their children at home;

3. Provide parents with information about the benefits of reading aloud to their children;

4. Present the curriculum in parent-friendly language;

5. Provide a bibliography of books for parents to use as read alouds;

6. Include a brochure of parent tips (available in English and Spanish);

7. Model a read-aloud session;

8. Model the use of higher-level questioning;

9. Present a workshop at a family literacy night; and

10. Keep copies of the curriculum guide in the school library for parents to check out.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this project. One limitation of the guide is that it is written in English and may not be as helpful to non-English speakers.

One of the main limitations of this project is the limited target population of its volunteers. This project's focus population is middle income families with school aged-children and middle and upper-income seniors. The middle-income families and seniors must have one adult member who does not work outside the home or who has flexible work hours. They must be able to volunteer at least one hour a week in the classroom on a regular basis.

A second limitation is teachers and administrators will need to support the idea of having parents and seniors be a part of their classroom. Teachers must be willing to spend time introducing volunteers to their own classroom philosophy and then supporting the volunteer as needed.

A third limitation is the volunteers' commitment to change. The literacy philosophy and strategies introduced in the workshop might be completely different than the way the volunteers learned to read themselves. Volunteers must be able to commit to a "new view of reading" and be

willing to accept and support readers with whole literacy strategies.

Outcomes

One of the expected outcomes of this project is to empower parents and volunteers with balanced literacy reading strategies where children are encouraged to make personal meaning from what they are reading in authentic ways. When volunteers are equipped with literacy strategies, they can help support beginning readers in the primary classroom.

Another outcome of this project is for parents and volunteers to lend support to the classroom teacher in grades one through three. When teacher and parents/volunteers work together using the same philosophy, children benefit as readers from their combined support and guidance. Lastly, but perhaps the most important expected outcome of this project is for parents and volunteers to be more effective partners in helping first through third graders develop success and a lifelong love of reading in and out of the classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESIGN OF THE PARENT TRAINING

The Parent Literacy Workshops model presented in
Chapter Three and based on the research in Chapter Two is
the foundation for the curriculum presented here. The
process represented by the model provides the basis for
designing a successful motivational literacy program for
parents of English language learners.

Rationale for the Design

The purpose of the curriculum presented in this
project is to provide an instructional plan for teaching
parents how to motivate their children both at home and in
school using sound theoretical principles. The project is
to be presented as a series of six workshops for parents
of primary students. It is designed to teach parents in
approaches to the development of literacy skills that they
will then apply in their own homes.

There are six lesson plans in the unit Parent
Literacy Workshops. The first lesson provides an
introduction to the theoretical foundations of the Parent
Literacy Workshops model. This lesson gives teachers the
opportunity to review strategies they now use for teaching

literacy and to explore their own beliefs about reading and motivation.

The next five lessons discuss approaches that empower parents to utilize different reading techniques and implement the skills through guided practice. Each lesson provides time for whole group discussions, small group work, teacher observations, and review of every skill and its relation to past skills taught.

The materials are presented in this project as they would be organized for the person giving the workshops. Each of the six lessons are followed by the necessary support materials, including mini-lessons for parents to attempt at home with their own children. These support materials include informational focus sheets and worksheets. During the workshops, the teacher can distribute the necessary focus sheets, worksheets, and instructional supplies to the parents when appropriate. Particularly helpful for teachers may be the project lesson plans that they can use as a guide to developing their own workshop lesson plans.

Assumptions

This curriculum involves assumptions regarding both the teacher and the parents. It is assumed that parents

involved in these workshops are aware of the crucial role motivation plays when their children acquire fundamental literacy skills.

School has changed dramatically since many parents were there and if the goal of parent involvement is to strengthen the link between home and school, parents need to be introduced to the revitalized school classroom. Many classroom learning strategies experienced by children every day such as keeping journals, working in cooperative learning groups, sharing, and learning in centers are unfamiliar to these same children's parents. Teachers cannot assume parents will support such learning strategies if parents do not understand what those strategies are or how they can be supported.

True school reform can only be accomplished through the understanding, support, and commitment of parents and teachers. The dilemma is that many parents feel disaffected from school. Many parents are not sure how they can best help their child succeed, and many have no support or encouragement from schools.

One way to unite the twin goals of school reform and parent advocacy is to establish learning collaborations among parents, their children, and their children's teachers. When such collaborations involve positive

experiences with the content of a renewed school curriculum, then an ongoing partnership between parent, teacher, and child is established through the values of learning. For those parents who have negative feelings about school and/or teachers, such a collaboration redefines the promise and worth of education.

The teacher of these workshops should have experience with the approaches to literacy in a motivational environment. Without this experience, it is difficult to provide the depth of information the parents will need to help their child both at home and in school as a volunteer.

Parents can best help their children succeed in school when they themselves have had positive experiences with reading, writing, and learning in school. Rather than viewing parents, teachers, school, and home as distinct and separate, we need to honor the primary relationship they all have in common: learning, and how to insure its success.

Teachers can find that they too have as much to gain from the workshop as parents. For teachers, working with parents bridges the often formidable, formal, "hands-off" chasm that exists between home and school. Just as workshops help demystify school and teachers for parents,

they also help demystify parents and home for the teachers. "Working together" sounds admirable, but it is really only possible when those who are expected to be "together" know and feel comfortable with each other. In addition, because of their experiential nature, the workshops give parents and teachers a chance to accomplish things as equal partners. For, after all, it has been frequently said, parents are a child's first teachers.

Such working partnerships between parents and teachers provide an added benefit to the school itself. Teachers and parents need each other as advocates for authentic learning not only in the classroom and the home, but also before school boards, at public forums, and in private deliberations. Through parent workshops, "them" rather quickly becomes "us."

This project creates a workshop approach that focuses on what children are learning in the classroom, and how the learning can be supported at home by parents. What emerges is a means to strengthen the relationship between home and school by forming an equal partnership between teachers and parents.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROPOSED PLAN OF ASSESSMENT

Formative Assessment

There are two categories of assessment in the curriculum for the Parent Literacy Workshops program. The first focuses on the teacher's informal evaluation of the parents and the second on the semi-structured teacher observation checklist for each parent. There is a close relationship between these categories of assessment. For example, teachers must implement the program appropriately before its success can be determined; therefore, program success depends upon the teacher's motivating the parents to learn literacy skills that they will in turn utilize at home with their children.

The following is a review of how assessment is applied in this curriculum. The Parent Literacy Workshops will be taught by certified teachers to adult parents. These parents are volunteering their time in hopes of learning valuable literacy techniques and strategies. Teachers will use "parent-friendly" terminology and teach the workshops in both English and Spanish. It is important to teach the workshop classes in the primary language of the parents, to insure comprehension. The literacy skills

acquired by the parents can in turn be taught at home when parents read with their children. The focus is to educate parents on reading techniques during the six weekly workshops. Before the first workshop, guidelines will be set. The classes should be no more than 15-20 parents. Limiting the class size benefits both the teacher and parents. Flexible small groups allow for parents and the teacher to get to know one another. Keeping the atmosphere low-key benefits the parents by keeping their anxiety levels low. Praising parents for taking the risk of coming to the workshops is important. Parents need to be validated for their efforts throughout the six weekly workshops.

The process of the formative assessment will be based on parent attendance and their participation, parent feedback, informal conversations between teacher and the parents, teacher semi-structured observations, and parent provided evaluation forms.

Criteria for Assessment

Though parent attendance and participation will not be mandatory, the teacher will keep track of both. The goal of the project is for the parents to attend and participate at least four out of the six workshops. During

the first 10-15 minutes of class, the teacher will encourage parent feedback on the lessons they have attempted at home. This allows for parents to reflect on skills they were successful with while reading with their child and clarification of the skills they have yet not mastered. During the group work, the teacher walks around the classroom, conducting informal conversations with the parents. The teacher asks the parents questions to check for their understanding of the literacy techniques taught in class.

It is important for the teacher to monitor the parents' progress throughout the six workshops. While walking around the classroom, the teacher carries a clipboard, to take notes on the observations. Through these semi-structured observations, the teacher becomes aware of what skills and techniques need to be revisited at the end of the lesson, before parents try to go home and read with their children. Before completing the six workshops, the parents are asked to complete provided evaluation forms. This essential feedback from the parents assists the teacher to improve future workshops.

Results of the Assessment

The attendance and participation are documented throughout the six weekly workshops. The result of the informal conversations held between parents and the teacher is also documented. The semi-structured observations are filled out by the teacher on each parent during the guided practice group meetings. At the end of the six workshops, a parent evaluation is filled out by the parents, to help the teacher assess the success of the Parent Literacy Workshops.

All of the assessments are kept informal and confidential. The basis for the assessments are for the teacher to see where there is a need for improvement when it comes to teaching parents literacy techniques they can use at home with their children. This ensures that by the end of the six workshops, the parents are able to demonstrate the necessary techniques to effectively teach literacy skills with their child at home.

Careful assessment not only informs the workshop facilitator of parents' understanding and ability to use the skills, but also provides induce that parents enjoy the activities and can communicate this enjoyment to their children. This, more than any other factor, promotes children's literacy engagement.

APPENDIX A

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One
An Introduction to Parent Literacy Workshops

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
> Introduction to the workshops, curriculum taught in K-2nd grade, Zoo Phonics, and evaluation forms.

Objectives:
> 1. To participate in class discussions and small group work.
> 2. Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
> 3. Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
> The following instructional supplies will be needed:
> - The Teacher's Informal Evaluation of the Parents (25) and 1 transparency
> - Hello my Name is …. stickers (25)
> - Sign-in sheet
> - Boxes of Crayola markers (25)
> - Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
> - Overheads on Kindergarten standards + workshop 6 week schedule
> - Index cards (25 sets of 100)
> - List of sight words for emergent readers for every parent and on an overhead transparency
> - Zoo Phonics Alphabet cards- 6 sets for teacher demonstrations and small group work, and 1 set per parent (estimated total 30)
> - Journal notebooks (25)
> - Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
> - Gift bags (25)
> - Hand held hole punchers (25)
> - Expandable metal rings (25)
> - Leveled books for parents to check out-levels 1-20 (20 kits)
> - Video tape by Zoo Phonics
> - Access to the laminating machine
> - Glue (25), Scissors (25)
> - Construction paper in various colors and scrap box
> - Paper cutter
> - Clipboard
> - Boom box
> - Ziploc baggies
> - Cassette tape of Zoo Phonics alphabet
> - Individual cassette tapes for each parent
> - Overhead Projector
> - Overhead Screen
> - Tables and chairs for all participants
> - Snack, beverage, napkins, and cups

Overview:

Participants will be introduced to the workshop and review the need for motivational literacy training. The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school. The Parent Literacy Workshop model will be introduced and workshop goals will be set after parent and teacher input.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

If participants are unknown to each other, the teacher and parents can take time to introduce themselves to the group.

A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will introduce herself/himself to the parents. "Hello" stickers and markers will be passed around for everyone to make themselves a name tag. The parents will take turns introducing themselves, how many children they have and grade levels. A sign-in sheet will be passed around for all participants to sign.

B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the six literacy workshops, the class time and schedule, importance of attendance, babysitting arrangements, daily workshop schedule, and highlights to expect during the six workshops.

C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for input and questions concerning the workshop schedule, highlights, and expectations of the classes. All suggestions will be written down on chart paper by the teacher, as parents respond. The chart paper will be displayed on the wall afterwards.

Step 2: *Purpose of the Parent Literacy Workshops*

The purpose is to become familiar with the latest reading methodology, the benefits of a motivational learning environment, and allows time for guided practice after teacher demonstrations.

A. *Empowering Parents:* The teacher will inform parents of the opportunities targeted towards them both at the district level and school site. For example parenting classes, ESL classes, volunteering in the classroom, helping in the office, class parties, school dances, and the various councils and committees available at the school site. Parents will be encouraged to participate and ask questions concerning the information covered.

B. *Reading Techniques:* The teacher will explain the three reading methods that will be taught during the workshops. The teacher will stress that only one reading method will be focused on, per workshop. Parents will be encouraged to participate and ask questions concerning the techniques/methods covered.

C. *Teacher Demonstrations:* The teacher will train parents through modeling and demonstrations on how to create a motivational learning environment at home to help further their child's literacy education. Parents will be encouraged to participate and ask questions concerning the demonstrations.

D. *Guided Practice:* The teacher will explain the concept of small group work and how the groups will be assembled. Parents will be encouraged to participate and ask questions concerning the group work.

Step 3: *Kindergarten, First grade, and Second grade Curriculum*

The teacher will present the curriculum to the parents, by grade level. An overhead projector, screen, and transparencies of the curriculum will be needed by the teacher.

A. The teacher will point out and explain the key concepts in the curriculum. Examples will be provided throughout the discussion. Parents will be encouraged to participate and ask questions concerning the curriculum.

Step 4: *Zoo Phonics*

The concept of utilizing Zoo Phonics for children in the Kindergarten and First grade classrooms, to acquire the letters and sounds of the alphabet quicker will be examined.

    A. *Philosophy:* The teacher will briefly describe the Zoo Phonics program to the parents. The history of the program, the cost, the past results at the school site, and benefits for the parents, teachers, and students using the program.

    B. *Video:* An instructional video will be shown to parents, demonstrating the Zoo Phonics method for teaching the alphabet. A group discussion will follow if necessary.

    C. *Teacher Demonstration:* The teacher will then slowly walk through each letter, focusing on the phrase, hand gesture, and sound that belongs with each letter. Parents will be encouraged to participate along with the teacher. The entire alphabet will be covered.

Step 5: *Small Group Work*

The teacher will ask parents to break into small groups of 3-4 parents at the tables.

    A. *Small Groups:* The parents will break off into groups of 3-4 parents. Together they will review the entire alphabet, focusing on hand gestures and sounds. Parents will use sample cards provided by the teacher (1 set per group).

    B. *Teacher:* The teacher will distribute the necessary supplies to each table while parents are working on the alphabet.

    C. *Art Time:* Parents will create a personal set of the alphabet cards. Markers, glue, scissors, construction paper, a paper cutter, and a laminating machine have all been provided for the parents to use. The teacher will play the Zoo Phonic cassette in the boom box for musical atmosphere and the opportunity for parents to practice while working on their cards.

Step 6: *Break*

> The teacher and parents will have 15 minutes to converse freely, finish their Zoo Phonic cards, clean-up their mess, and have a small snack. A beverage and snack such as punch and cookies will be provided by the teacher.

Step 7: *Review of Workshop #1*

> The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #1, applying the Zoo Phonics alphabet at home, followed by a simple evaluation.

> A. *Questions:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

> B. *Review of the Alphabet:* The teacher will ask the parents if there are any letters they would like to review one more time or about the Zoo Phonics program. Then the teacher will lead the parents through the Zoo Phonic alphabet one more time using the cassette tape and classroom boom box. Parents will be encouraged to use their personal set of cards while reviewing the alphabet.

> C. *Application:* The teacher will make several suggestions in regards to when and how parents can use the alphabet cards with their children at home. Suggestions may include on a picnic, every evening after dinner, before bedtime, while driving in the car etc.

> D. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will explain the purpose of evaluations. The teacher will demonstrate how simple and quick each evaluation is to complete by demonstrating on an overhead transparency. The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 8: *Cleaning Up the Room*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

    A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

    B. *Materials Check-Out:* The teacher will explain the purpose and regulations regarding to checking out of school materials. Literacy bags will be available with 20-leveled books inside, ranging from levels #1-20. Parents will have the opportunity to check out the literacy bags on a weekly basis, to read at home with their children.

    C. *Next Workshop:* The teacher will briefly highlight what to expect at the next workshop.

    D. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent. Bags can include bookmarks, pencils, stickers, books, and informational pamphlets for parents in both English and Spanish.

    E. *Good-Bye:* The teacher will thank the parents for their time, effort, and attendance. Class will be dismissed.

Lesson Two
For the Love of Reading!

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
Book terminology, questioning, predicting, checking for comprehension, and reading at home

Objectives:
1. To participate in class discussions and small group work.
2. Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
3. Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
The following instructional supplies will be needed:
- Hello my Name is.... stickers (25)
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
- 1 set of Zoo Phonics Alphabet cards
- Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
- Gift bags (25)
- Leveled books for parents to check out-levels 1-20 (20 kits)
- Glue (25), Scissors (25)
- Clipboard
- Boom box
- Cassette tape of Zoo Phonics alphabet
- Overhead Projector
- Overhead Screen
- 25 Read Aloud Books- The Wednesday Surprise written by Eve Bunting, 1989
- Tables and chairs for all participants
- Snack, beverages, napkins, and cups

Overview:

The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

Parents will make nametags and sign in.

A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will distribute "Hello" stickers and markers for everyone to make themselves a name tag.

B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the workshop. Parent input will be written down on chart paper and then hung on the wall.

C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for feedback from their perspective on the previous workshop, lessons they tried at home, Zoo Phonics, or any other questions they may have pertaining literacy.

Step 2: *Parts of a book*

The teacher will explain that children need experiences with books long before they are ever expected to read. The teacher will teach the necessary vocabulary students need to know when it comes to the parts of a book.

A. *Front and Back Covers:* The teacher will model the way to hold a book as well as locate the front and back cover. The proper terminology will be used whenever appropriate. The teacher will also explain the difference between a hard cover book and a paperback book.

B. *Spine:* The teacher will point out the spine of several different books for parents to visually see the different types of book spines that are available.

C. *Title and Author:* The teacher will point out the title and author on every book used in the teacher demonstration. The teacher will encourage parents to do the same every time they read a book to their child.

Step 3: *Questions to ask*

The teacher will explain that children need experiences with books long before they are ever expected to read. The teacher will cover the questions with the parents before demonstrating the strategies.

A. *Before Reading:* The teacher will use the overhead machine and "Before Reading" question list transparency to go over the list of questions that can be used before reading any book.

B. *During Reading:* The teacher will use the overhead machine and "During Reading" question list transparency to go over the list of questions that can be used while reading any book.

C. *After Reading:* The teacher will use the overhead machine and "After Reading" question list transparency to go over the list of questions that can be used after reading any book.

Step 4: *Teacher Read Aloud Demonstration*

The teacher will demonstrate several mini-lessons focusing on questions that should be asked before reading the book. Parents will take on the role of child, while the teacher takes on the role as parent modeling a shared reading between parent and child or teacher and student.

A. *Identifying Book Parts:* The teacher will quickly review the book parts.

B. *Making Predictions:* The teacher will model the "Before Reading" questions to make predictions before beginning to read.

C. *Read:* The teacher will read the book to the parents, stopping to ask "During Reading" questions to check for comprehension.

Step 5: *Small Group Work*

> The teacher will ask parents to break into small groups of 3-4 parents at the tables.

> A. *Small Groups:* The parents will break off into groups of 3-4 parents. Together they will review the questions.

> B. *Read Alouds:* The parents will practice reading aloud together using the new book terminology, predictions, and questions covered in the workshop today. Books will be provided by the teacher. (Appendix G for the complete book list)

> C. *Teacher:* The teacher will distribute the necessary books to each table while parents are working on reviewing the questions. The teacher will walk around observing the small groups, taking notes on the clipboard informally evaluating the parents. If any group needs assistance, the teacher will stop and redemonstrate key points when necessary.

Step 6: *Break*

> The teacher will provide beverage and snack.

Step 7: *Review of Workshop #2*

> The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #2 followed by a simple evaluation.

> A. *Questions:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

> B. *Review of the Questions:* The teacher will quickly reread the questions off of the three lists provided to the parents. Parents will be encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything that they do not understand.

C. *Application:* The teacher will make several suggestions in regards to when and how parents can use the series of questions when reading with their child at home. The homework will be for every parent to read 3 books (at least) next week to their child trying some of the questions.

D. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 8: *Closure*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

B. *Materials Check-Out:* The teacher will explain the purpose and regulations regarding to checking out of school materials. Literacy bags will be available with 20 leveled books inside, ranging from levels #1-20. Parents will have the opportunity to check out the literacy bags on a weekly basis, to read at home with their children.

C. *Next Workshop:* The teacher will briefly highlight what to expect at the next workshop.

D. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent. Bags can include bookmarks, pencils, stickers, books, and informational pamphlets for parents in both English and Spanish.

E. *Good-Bye:* The teacher will thank the parents for their time, effort, and attendance. Class will be dismissed.

Lesson Three
Creating an Enriched Home Learning Environment

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
Motivation, Self-Esteem, Importance of Routines, and Shared Reading

Objectives:
1. To participate in class discussions and small group work.
2. Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
3. Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
The following instructional supplies will be needed:
- Hello my Name is…. stickers (25)
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
- Index cards (25 sets of 100)
- List of sight words for emergent readers for every parent and on an overhead transparency
- Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
- Gift bags (25)
- Hand held hole punchers (25)
- Expandable metal rings (25)
- Leveled books for parents to check out-levels 1-20 (20 kits)
- Glue (25), Scissors (25)
- Clipboard
- Boom box
- Overhead Projector
- Overhead Screen
- Tables and chairs for all participants
- Snack, beverages, napkins, and cups

Overview:

The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

Parents will make nametags and sign in.

- A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will distribute "Hello" stickers and markers for everyone to make themselves a name tag.

- B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the workshop. Parent input will be written down on chart paper and then hung on the wall.

- C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for feedback from their perspective on the previous workshop, lessons they tried at home, Zoo Phonics, or any other questions they may have pertaining literacy.

Step 2: *Motivation and Self-Esteem*

The teacher will teach a mini lecture on Motivation and Self-Esteem to the parents. The school Counselor could co-teach as a guest presenter if available.

- A. *Issues at School and Home:* The teacher will give the Parents as First Teachers lecture.

- B. *Warning Signs:* The teacher will go over the warning signs of problems at school that parents should look for with their own children.

- C. *Discipline:* The teacher will go over the importance of discipline both at home and at school. A parent discussion will follow.

Step 3: *Importance of Routines*

The teacher will lead a discussion on the importance of routines both at home and at school. Topics to be discussed will be, but are not limited to chores, homework, time for television, time for reading, a set bedtime, and a complete breakfast.

A. *Homework:* The teacher will explain the importance homework and the role parents can play when it comes to homework and routines.

B. *Television and Reading:* The teacher will stress the importance of quality family television programs and books at home.

C. *Bedtime and Breakfast:* The teacher will explain that children need sleep and how breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Step 4: *Teacher Read Aloud Demonstration*

Teacher Read Aloud Demonstration. The teacher will demonstrate several mini-lessons focusing on questions that should be asked before reading the book. Parents will take on the role of child, while the teacher takes on the role as parent modeling a shared reading between parent and child or teacher and student.

A. *Identifying Book Parts:* The teacher will quickly review the book parts.

B. *Making Predictions:* The teacher will model the "Before Reading" questions to make predictions before beginning to read.

C. *Read:* The teacher will read the book to the parents, stopping to ask "During Reading" questions to check for comprehension.

D. *Review:* The teacher will model using the "After Reading" questions to summarize the book and check for reading/listening comprehension

Step 5: *Small Group Work*

Parents will get together in their small groups and will practice reading aloud together using book terminology, predictions, and questions covered in the workshop both last week and today.

A. *Small Groups:* The parents will break off into groups of 3-4 parents. Together they will review the questions.

B. *Read Alouds:* The parents will practice reading aloud together using book terminology, predictions, and questions covered in the workshop both last week and today.

C. *Teacher:* The teacher will distribute the necessary books to each table, while parents are working on reviewing the questions. The teacher will walk around observing the small groups, taking notes on the clipboard informally evaluating the parents. If any group needs assistance, the teacher will stop and redemonstrate key points when necessary.

Step 6: *Break*

The teacher will provide beverage and snack.

Step 7: *Review of Workshop #3*

The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #3 followed by a simple evaluation.

A. *Questions:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

B. *Review of the Questions:* The teacher will quickly reread the questions off of the three lists provided to the parents. Parents will be encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything that they do not understand.

C. *Application:* The teacher will make several suggestions in regards to when and how parents can use the series of questions when reading with their child at home. The homework will be for every parent to read 3 books (at least) next week to their child trying some of the questions.

D. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 8: *Closure*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

B. *Materials Check-Out:* Parents will have the opportunity to check out the literacy bags on a weekly basis, to read at home with their children.

C. *Next Workshop:* The teacher will briefly highlight what to expect at the next workshop.

D. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent.

E. *Good-Bye:* The teacher will thank the parents for their time, effort, and attendance. Class will be dismissed.

Lesson Four
Sight Word Mania!

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
Sight Words, Mini-lessons, and "Making and Breaking" Words

Objectives:
1. To participate in class discussions and small group work.
2. Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
3. Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
The following instructional supplies will be needed:
- Hello my Name is…. stickers (25)
- Sign-in sheet
- Boxes of Crayola markers (25)
- Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
- Index cards (25 sets of 100)
- List of sight words for emergent readers for every parent and on an overhead transparency
- Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
- Gift bags (25)
- Hand held hole punchers (25)
- Expandable metal rings (25)
- Leveled books for parents to check out-levels 1-20 (20 kits)
- Scissors (25)
- Clipboard
- Boom box
- Ziploc baggies
- Overhead Projector
- Overhead Screen
- Tables and chairs for all participants
- Snack, beverages, napkins, and cups

Overview:

The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

Parents will make nametags and sign in.

A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will distribute "Hello" stickers and markers for everyone to make themselves a name tag.

B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the workshop. Parent input will be written down on chart paper and then hung on the wall.

C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for feedback from their perspective on the previous workshop, lessons they tried at home, Zoo Phonics, or any other questions they may have pertaining literacy.

Step 2: *Sight Words*

The teacher will go over the common found sight words used in the reading running records and leveled guided reading books used in the primary classrooms.

A. *When to Expect Children to Read:* The teacher will briefly go over the research regarding children and literacy acquisition.

B. *How to Help Your Child Learn How to Read:* The teacher will explain how parents can help children learn how to read through mini-lessons at home.

C. *Top Fifty Words in Kindergarten:* The teacher will use the overhead machine and a transparency to teach the sight words to the parents.

Step 3: *Teacher Demonstration*

The teacher will demonstrate through several mini-lessons how to "Make and Break" words using magnetic letters.

A. *"Making and Breaking" Words:* Teacher will demonstrate a mini-lesson using magnetic letters and magnetic boards incorporating the sight words.

Step 4: *Small Group Work*

Parents will work in small groups to go over the sight words using their flash cards as well as "Making and Breaking" sight words with a partner.

A. *Materials Distributed:* The teacher will distribute sight word list to the parents.

B. *Flashcards:* Parents will make personal sets of sight word flashcards to take home out of index cards. All materials such as markers, index cards, hole punchers, baggies, and metal rings will be provided by the teacher.

C. *Group Work:* Parents will work in groups of 3-4 to go over the sight words using their flash cards.

D. *Mini-Lesson Practice:* Parents will practice "Making and Breaking" sight words with a partner.

Step 5: *Break*

The teacher will provide a beverage and snack.

Step 6: *Review of Workshop #4*

The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #4 followed by a simple evaluation.

A. *Questions:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

B. *Review of the Questions:* The teacher will quickly reread the questions off of the three lists provided to the parents. Parents will be encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything that they do not understand.

C. *Application:* The teacher will make several suggestions in regards to when and how parents can use the series of questions when reading with their child at home. The homework will be for every parent to read 3 books (at least) next week to their child trying some of the questions.

D. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 7: *Closure*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

B. *Materials Check-Out:* Parents will have the opportunity to check out magnetic letters and a magnetic board, along with leveled reading books.

C. *Next Workshop:* The teacher will briefly highlight what to expect at the next workshop.

D. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent.

E. *Good-Bye:* The teacher will thank the parents for their time, effort, and attendance. Class will be dismissed.

Lesson Five
Mathematical Concepts

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
Mathematical concepts and vocabulary for primary age students

Objectives:
1.   To participate in class discussions and small group work.
2.   Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
3.   Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
The following instructional supplies will be needed:

- Hello my Name is.... stickers (25)
- Sign-in sheet
- Boxes of Crayola markers (25)
- Math manipuliatives found at school
- Assortment of 25 different types of noodles
- Assortment of 10 different types of beans
- Sentence strips- various colors
- Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
- Index cards (25 sets of 100)
- List of mathematical sight words for primary students for every parent and on an overhead transparency

- Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
- Gift bags (25)
- Hand held hole punchers (25)
- Expandable metal rings (25)
- Leveled books for parents to check out-levels 1-20 (20 kits)
- Glue (25) Scissors (25)
- Clipboard
- Ziploc baggies
- Overhead Projector
- Overhead Screen
- Tables and chairs for all participants
- Snack, beverages, napkins, and cups

Overview:

The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

Parents will make nametags and sign in.

A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will distribute "Hello" stickers and markers for everyone to make themselves a name tag.

B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the workshop. Parent input will be written down on chart paper and then hung on the wall.

C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for feedback from their perspective on the previous workshop, lessons they tried at home, Zoo Phonics, or any other questions they may have pertaining literacy.

Step 2: *Mathematical Concepts for Primary Grades*

The teacher will go over the mathematical concepts on patterning, counting to one hundred, colors, and shapes.

A. *Patterning:* The teacher will briefly cover patterns by color, shape, size, and letters.

B. *Counting to One Hundred:* The teacher will inform parents that children must be able to orally count and read numbers both in and out of order up to one hundred.

C. *Colors and Shapes:* The teacher will briefly go over the basic colors and shapes that students must master.

Step 3: *Vocabulary Needed for Primary Math*

The teacher will demonstrate through mini-lessons vocabulary words used in school, on District tests, and SAT-9 tests, mathematical manipulatives used in the primary classrooms, and materials that can be used at home to teach mathematical concepts.

A. *Vocabulary Words:* The teacher will use the overhead machine to display the vocabulary words and show visual examples.

B. *Materials Used in the Classroom:* The teacher will have sample manipulatives used in primary classrooms that are used to teach mathematical concepts.

C. *Materials That Can Be Used at Home:* The teacher will have sample manipulatives that can be used at home to teach mathematical concepts.

Step 4: *Teacher Demonstration*

The teacher will demonstrate through mini-lessons the mathematical concepts on patterning, counting to one hundred, colors, and shapes.

A. *Lesson on Patterning:* The teacher will demonstrate several mini-lessons on patterning.

B. *Lesson on Counting:* The teacher will demonstrate several mini-lessons on counting.

C. *Lesson on Colors and Shapes:* The teacher will demonstrate several mini-lessons on colors and shapes.

Step 5: *Group Work*

        Parents will make personal sets of sight word flashcards to take home. Parents will then work together in pairs to create mini-lessons and practice using the flashcards and manipulatives with each other.

        A. *Materials Distributed:* The teacher will distribute sight word math vocabulary list to the parents.

        B. *Flashcards:* Parents will make personal sets of sight word flashcards to take home.

        C. *Group Work:* Parents will work in groups of 3-4 to go over the sight words using their flash cards.

        D. *Partner Work:* Parents will work together in pairs to create mini-lessons and practice using the manipulatives with each other.

Step 6: *Break*

        The teacher will provide a beverage and snack.

Step 7: *Review of Workshop #5*

        The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #5 followed by a simple evaluation.

        A. *Questions?:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

        B. *Review of the Questions:* The teacher will quickly reread the questions off of the three lists provided to the parents. Parents will be encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything that they do not understand.

        C. *Application:* The teacher will make several suggestions in regards to when and how parents can use the sight words at home in mini-lessons with their children.

        D. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 8: *Closure*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

B. *Materials Check-Out:* Parents will have the opportunity to check out magnetic letters, a magnetic board, and leveled reading books.

C. *Next Workshop:* The teacher will briefly highlight what to expect at the next workshop.

D. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent.

E. *Good-Bye:* The teacher will thank the parents for their time, effort, and attendance. Class will be dismissed.

Lesson Six
Family Game Night

Target Level: Adults
Time Frame: 2 ½ hours
Class Size: 15-20 parents and 1 teacher

Topics:
Review of past workshops, family game night, and wrap up session

Objectives:
1. To participate in class discussions and small group work.
2. Parents will acquire literacy skills that can be taken home and applied with their own children.
3. Parents will be able to self-evaluate themselves after each workshop.

Materials:
The following instructional supplies will be needed:
- Hello my Name is.... stickers (25)
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart pad for group discussion notes and Tape
- List of sight words for emergent readers for every parent and on an overhead transparency
- Ink pens (25), Pencils (25)
- Gift bags (25)
- Clipboard
- Ziploc baggies
- 22 Assorted Board Games-Sorry, Candy Land, and Shuts and Ladders
- 22 Decks of Cards
- Llegos
- Play-doh
- Tables and chairs for all participants
- Snack, beverages, napkins, and cups

Overview:

The teacher will review strategies used to teach literacy skills to children and how to create a motivational learning environment both at home and school.

Step 1: *Introduction to the Workshop*

Parents will make nametags and sign in.

A. *Welcome and Sign-in:* The teacher will welcome parents on an individual basis as they enter into the classroom. Once the workshop has started, the teacher will distribute "Hello" stickers and markers for everyone to make themselves a name tag.

B. *Warm-up Discussion:* The teacher will start off with the purpose of the workshop. Parent input will be written down on chart paper and then hung on the wall.

C. *Parent Feedback and Expectations:* The teacher will ask the parents for feedback from their perspective on the previous workshop, lessons they tried at home, Zoo Phonics, or any other questions they may have pertaining literacy.

Step 2: *Review of Past Workshops*

The teacher and parents will review the past workshops.

A. *Workshops One and Two:* The teacher will do a brief review of lessons One and Two.

B. *Workshops Three and Four:* The teacher will do a brief review of lessons Three and Four.

C. *Workshop Five:* The teacher will do a brief review of lesson Five.

Step 3: *Family Game Night*

The teacher will introduce and discuss various board games, card games, and activities that can be done with llegos and play-doh at home.

A. *Average Costs and Benefits:* The teacher will go over the average cost for board games, decks of cards, llegos, and play-doh at the local merchants such as Walmart, Kmart, Target, and Toys-R-Us.

B. *Appropriate Games For Primary Age Students:* A game list of the top ten games for primary age students will be provided to the parents.

Step 4: *Teacher Demonstration*

The teacher will briefly review the rules of each game and then demonstrate how to properly play the games.

A. *Board games- Candy Land, Sorry, and Shuts and Ladders:* The teacher will briefly review the rules of each game and then demonstrate how to properly play the games. Only three games will be taught due to the lack of time.

B. *Card Games go fish and war:* The teacher will briefly review the rules of each game and then demonstrate how to properly play the games. Only three games will be taught due to the lack of time.

C. *Llegos and Play-doh:* The teacher will briefly review the rules of each game and then demonstrate how to properly play the games. Only three games will be taught due to the lack of time.

Step 5: *Small Group Work*

The parents will break off into small groups and participate in game centers.

A. *Game Centers:* The teacher will be set up games at various tables and allow 4 parents per group to spend approximately 10 minutes at each game center.

B. *Teacher Observation:* The teacher will walk around and observe and participate in the game centers with the parents, as well as informally evaluate the parents as they take part in the centers.

Step 6: *Review of Workshop #5*

The teacher will lead a discussion asking the parents for feedback and questions regarding Workshop #5 followed by a simple evaluation.

A. *Questions:* The teacher will ask for any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the evening workshop. All parent feedback will be written down on chart paper and displayed on the wall. The teacher will take in account any/all suggestions regarding the parent feedback to help better perfect future literacy workshops.

B. *Evaluation Time:* The teacher will give an informal evaluation (see Appendix D) to each parent.

Step 7: *Closure*

Following the review session, the teacher and parents will quickly clean-up the room. While cleaning, the teacher will discuss the highlights of the next workshop, pass out instructional materials that can be used at home and gift bags for attending the workshop, then finally say good-bye.

A. *Clean-Up:* The teacher and parents will clean-up the classroom together.

B. *Materials Hand-Out:* The teacher will disturbute board games, decks of cards, llegos, and play-doh for parents to take them home.

C. *Gifts:* The teacher will distribute gift bags to each parent.

D. *Good-Bye:* The parents and teacher will have a good-bye potluck, where they can eat and discuss literacy activities and mini-lesson ideas together.

APPENDIX B

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Parents as First Teachers:
Creating an Enriched Home Learning Environment

Children are Always Ready to Learn.

What Parents Should Do:
- Turn as many everyday life experiences as possible into learning opportunities.
- Model learning from everyday experiences.
- Talk about the importance of learning and going to school.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Interact with children only when they ask a question.
- Say, "I don't have time to talk."

Children Have a Curiosity for Learning.

What Parents Should Do:
- Take advantage of children's questions to expand learning.
- Capitalize on children's interest in selecting learning experiences.
- Plan the home physical environment with children's needs and desires in mind.
- Purchase toys that are specifically designed to stimulate children's thinking and creativity.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Leave children's learning to chance.
- Children Learn From Their Environment:

What Parents Should Do:
- Expose children to experiences that teach social, academic, and motor skills.
- Allow children to interact with their environment; allow them to explore and ask questions.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Expose children to experiences that focus on only one set of skills.
- Only expose children to experiences interesting to parents.

Children Thrive in an Environment of Love and Respect

What Parents Should Do:
- Show love for their children equally.
- Celebrate the uniqueness of each child.
- Respect children's views of the world.
- Ask and value children's opinions.
- Provide opportunities to experience positive feelings about themselves.
- Model respect for other's beliefs and values.
- Expect children to respect other's beliefs and values.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Be partial to some of your children.
- Criticize children for their actions and behaviors.
- Impose your will without explanation for your action.
- Children Have a Potential for Acquiring Language.

What Parents Should Do:
- Talk to their children as often as possible.
- Engage children in conversations.
- Ask for their views about certain topics of interest.
- Increase children's vocabulary on different topics.

What Parent Should Avoid:
- Criticize children for the way they express themselves.
- Turn down an opportunity to explain or respond to a question.
- Expect children to listen passively.
- Dominate a conversation with children.

Children Can Communicate Their Ideas in Many Different Ways.

What Parents Should Do:
- Provide opportunities to communicate ideas through speech, art, or writing.
- Show children ways to communicate ideas.
- Encourage children to use acceptable behavior.
- Provide opportunities to appreciate music and art.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Criticize cultures or languages that are different from theirs.
- Pressure children to react or respond in one specific way.

Children Can Acquire a Love and Desire for Reading

What Parents Should Do:
- Stress the importance of comprehending what is read.
- Provide opportunities to select topics or books to read.
- Read to children starting at an early age.
- Have print materials at home at all times.
- Read labels and signs to and with children.
- Expose children to different literature styles at any early age.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Ask children to conform with your selection of reading materials only.
- Force children to begin decoding words when they are not ready.
- Criticize children for not liking to read.
- Compare children to other children's accomplishments.

Children Learn in Different Ways

What Parents Should Do:
- Provide learning opportunities using all the senses.
- Teach that some questions have no right or wrong answer.
- Provide opportunities for problem solving using different senses.
- Provide time for role-playing.

What Parents Should Avoid:
- Teaching children to learn by only reading and memorizing the facts.
- Teach that one way of learning is better than another.

Parents as First Teachers Checklist

Rate each item according to the degree that it is practiced in your household, by writing the appropriate number in the blank to the right of the statement.
Use the following codes: Always = 1   Sometimes = 2   Never = 3

1. I take advantage of as many learning opportunities for my children as possible.   _____

2. I model by taking advantage of as many learning opportunities as possible.   _____

3. I talk about the importance of learning from every experience with my children.   _____

4. I take advantage of my children's questions by extending learning.   _____

5. I capitalize on my children's interests in selecting learning experiences.   _____

6. I plan my home environment with my children's needs and desires in mind.   _____

7. I purchase toys that stimulate children's thinking skills.   _____

8. I expose my children to experiences that develop social, academic, and motor skills.   _____

9. I respect my children's views of the world.   _____

10. I ask children for their opinions.   _____

11. I acknowledge my children's efforts.   _____

12. I praise my children's accomplishments. _____

13. I model respect for other's beliefs and values. _____

14. I expect my children to respect others' beliefs and values. _____

15. I talk to my children as often as possible. _____

16. I engage in conversations and discussions with my children. _____

17. I ask for my children's views about certain topics. _____

18. I strive to increase my children's vocabularies in many different topics. _____

19. I provide opportunities for my children to express their ideas in different ways. _____

20. I model how ideas can be expressed in different ways. _____

21. I acknowledge my children's use of acceptable behavior. _____

22. I redirect my children's use of unacceptable behavior. _____

23. I provide opportunities for my children to appreciate art and music. _____

24. I probe to ensure that my children understand the importance of comprehending what is read. _____

25. I provide opportunities for children to select topics or books to be read. _____

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26. I read to my children constantly.   _____

27. I have print material available at home.   _____

28. I read all labels and signs with my children.   _____

29. I expose my children to classic literature.   _____

30. I provide my children opportunities to use the
    different senses to learn.   _____

31. I teach my children that some questions do not
    have a right answer.   _____

32. I provide my children opportunities for problem
    solving using the different senses.   _____

33. I provide my children opportunities to role play.   _____

APPENDIX C

TEACHER OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

SEMI-STRUCTURED TEACHER OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Parent Name:_____ Date:_____

1. Use of Techniques:

		Mastered	Developing	Beginning
•	Behavior	3	2	1
•	Key Phrases	3	2	1

2. Overall Tone:

		Mastered	Developing	Beginning
•	Crisp and On Task	3	2	1
•	Positive	3	2	1

Parent Name:_____ Date:_____

1. Use of Techniques:

		Mastered	Developing	Beginning
•	Behavior	3	2	1
•	Key Phrases	3	2	1

2. Overall Tone:

		Mastered	Developing	Beginning
•	Crisp and On Task	3	2	1
•	Positive	3	2	1

APPENDIX D

INFORMAL PARENT EVALUATION

Parent Name: _____ Date:_____

Things I am "SQUARE" with

Think I'm still going around with

Parent Name: _____ Date:_____
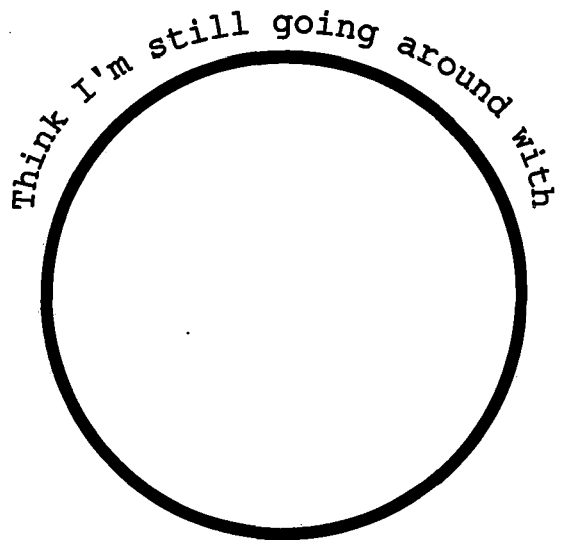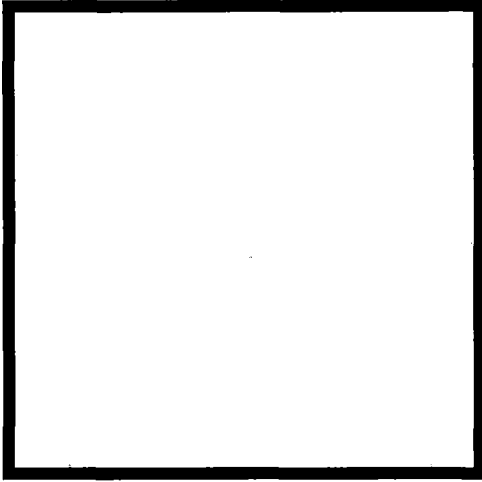
Things I am "SQUARE" with

Think I'm still going around with
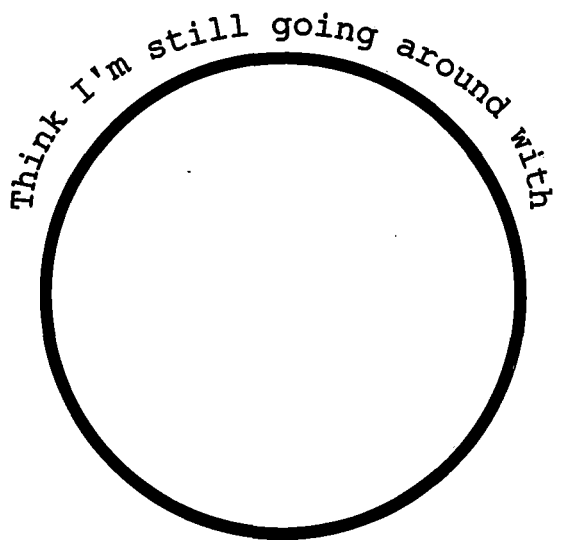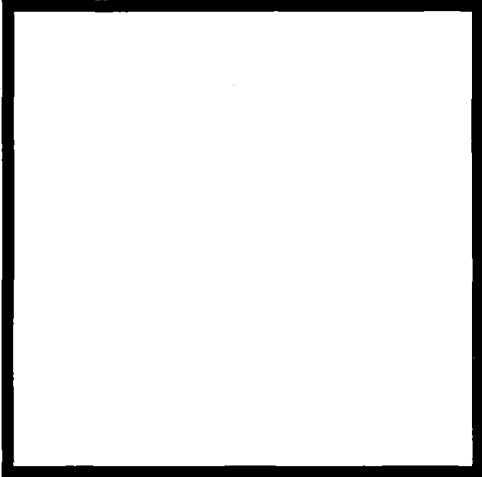
APPENDIX E

PARENT LITERACY EVALUATIONS

Parent Literacy Workshop Evaluation #1

1. My general reaction to the Parent Literacy Workshop is:

2. I think the workshops could be improved if:

3. As a result of the workshops, I want to:

4. My final comment on this experience is:

Parent Evaluation #2

1. Give examples in your life that show the success of these workshops:

2. What should we change about the way the Parent Literacy Workshops operated?

3. Do you have any ideas about how you want the Parent Literacy Workshops to operate next year?

4. How would you rate this project? CIRCLE ONE:

1	2	3	4	5
POOR	NOT HELPFUL	OK	GOOD	TERRIFIC

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

<center>Sample Letter to Parents</center>

Dear Parents,

Some parents have expressed an interest in learning how to help their children become more successful in school. We will be offering a series of six Parent Literacy Workshops starting Tuesday September 10th, from 5:00-7:30 pm. We will always begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. so that we are able to make the best use of our time together.

Our classes will occur as follows:

Tuesday, September 10th
Tuesday, September 17th
Tuesday, September 24th
Tuesday, October 1st
Tuesday, October 8th
Tuesday, October 15th

Parent Literacy Workshops will be held in room _____ at our school site.

Childcare will be available in room _____.

We are looking for parents that are interested in a full six-week commitment to the workshops. If you are interested in joining us, please return this sheet to the school office by Tuesday, August 19th.

_____ I will be able to attend on a weekly basis and will be available at 5:00 p.m.

_____ I will not be able to attend, but please keep my name on the list for future classes.

Name _____
Address _____
Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____
Best Time to Call _____

If you have any questions, please contact the office at _____ school phone number _____.

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Sample Follow Up Letter to Parents

Dear _____,

WELCOME to the Parent Literacy Workshop! As you know, we plan to meet in room _____ on Tuesday evenings from 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

September 10th, 17th, and 24th
October 1st, 8th, and 15th

The purpose of the Parent Literacy Workshops are to inform you of educational philosophies and how they relate to home and classroom activities. Tentative topics include:

September 10th   Introduction to the Workshop/Zoo Phonics
September 17th   For the Love of Reading
September 24th   Creating an Enriched Home Learning Environment
October 1st   Sight Word Mania
October 8th   Mathematical Concepts
October 15th   Family Game Night

We will make every effort to do activities when we meet as a way of enjoying ourselves and promoting understanding and open discussion.

Child care will be in room _____. We look forward to seeing you next Tuesday evening at 5:00 p.m.

APPENDIX G

READ ALOUD BOOK LIST

READ ALOUD BOOKS USED IN THE PARENT LITERACY WORK SHOPS

Children's books, with their wealth of imaginative experience and illustration, offer a rich and enduring resource for readers. The following books have been chosen to be used in the Parent Literacy Workshops:

Bunting, E. (1989). The Wednesday surprise. Wimington, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.

Giff, P. G. (1980). Today was a terrible day. East Rutherford, NJ: Penguin Putnam.

Cohen, M. (1980). First grade takes a test. Madison, WI: Demco Media.

Browne, A. (1986). Piggybook. Madison, WI: Demco Media.

Johnson, A. (1989). Tell me a story, Mama. New York: Orchard Books.

Snape, J., & Snape, C. (1987). The Boy With Square Eyes. Old Tappen, NJ: Simon and Schuster Children's Books.

Loh, M. (1987). Tucking mommy in. New York: Orchard Books.

APPENDIX H

SIGN-IN SHEET

Sign-In Sheet for the Parent Literacy Workshops

NAME: DATE:

1. _____   _____

2. _____   _____

3. _____   _____

4. _____   _____

5. _____   _____

6. _____   _____

7. _____   _____

8. _____   _____

9. _____   _____

10. _____   _____

11. _____   _____

12. _____   _____

13. _____   _____

14. _____   _____

15. _____   _____

16. _____   _____

17. _____   _____

18. _____   _____

19. _____   _____

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