

A RESEARCH PAPER RELATED TO
THE EFFECTS OF PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION
ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

By

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Parent-teacher communication

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PROJECT I RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the literature related to the complex relationship between teachers and parents in the public school setting. The main focus examines the effects of parent-teacher communication on student performance. Lastly, the literature demonstrates that increased frequency of communication between parents and teachers leads to an increase in academic performance and achievement among students. Ecological systems theory as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is used as the conceptual framework. The literature shows that parental involvement in students' education has positive outcomes in terms of academic performance (Sirvani, 2007, Xu & Gulosino, 2006) However, communication barriers between teachers and parents still exist, preventing parents from effectively voicing their concerns in relation to their child's education (Hawes, 2008, Montgomery, 2005, & Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, & Jayanthi, 2001). Strategies to increase the frequency and effectiveness of parent-teacher communication can be further implemented to improve the relationship between home and school, thereby effectively stabilizing the student's environment and fostering academic growth and achievement (Thompson, 2008, Andrews, 2008, & Scott, 2007).

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers must recognize that each student exists within its own individualized ecological environment, with a variety of forces affecting development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When a solid parent-teacher relationship is established, it can provide additional adult reinforcement that assists student academic achievement outside of the school setting (Bobetsky, 2003). The teacher-parent relationship is often more important to improving student achievement than any other measure (Xu & Gulosino, 2006).

Student achievement has always been a prominent issue in education amongst educators, administrators and parents. With the current push in the United States to increase student academic performance in order to meet federally-mandated standards, a variety of strategies are needed to encourage and assist student achievement inside the classroom. Teachers must determine the most effective ways to facilitate learning and increase test scores while being mindful of the increasing dichotomy between the school environment and the

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home environment. In an attempt to bridge the cultural gap between school and community, can increased parent-teacher communication improve academic performance for students? This essential question will be addressed in this review.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature related to parent-teacher communication and its effect on student academic performance. A second purpose is to use this research to design a research project in education related to the topic of increasing student academic achievement.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this research question stems from Urie Bronfenbrenner's findings regarding environmental interconnectedness and its impact on human development and growth.

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Bronfenbrenner's 1979 book, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, defines the ecology of human development as involving the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 21)

Conditions existing within the external environment heavily determine whether or not individuals can perform effectively in varying societal roles. Demands, stresses, and supports (or lack thereof) from the existing environment have a major impact on individual human development. Bronfenbrenner states that "the interaction between person and environment is viewed as two-directional, characterized by reciprocity (1979, p. 22)."

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According to Bronfenbrenner, "the ecological environment extends far beyond the immediate situation" (1979, p. 7) and has different levels of complexity. An individual's ecological environment can be described as having different structures that are nested together, resulting in the total environment (1979). The inner level consists of the individual and his or her immediate setting, with subsequent levels following in an interconnected manner. This

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inner level, referred to by Bronfenbrenner as the microsystem, is followed by the mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

The microsystem includes all of the activities, roles, and personal experiences of an individual within a particular setting with certain characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A setting can be any place where an individual participates in daily interactions with other humans. The events that take place within that setting can be recorded as being similar for many different people. However, it is the individual meaning or interpretation assigned to each event that makes environmental factors relevant in the study of human ecology.

The second level is referred to as the mesosystem, which combines the activities of two or more settings for the individual. Settings such as work and school would be included in this category. When a person moves in to a new realm in society, he or she is operating within the mesosystem (1979).

Thirdly, the exosystem includes settings that do not necessarily involve the developing individual, but may still manage to affect that person from more distant channels. Examples of this would include events in the lives of relatives or peers that do not affect the

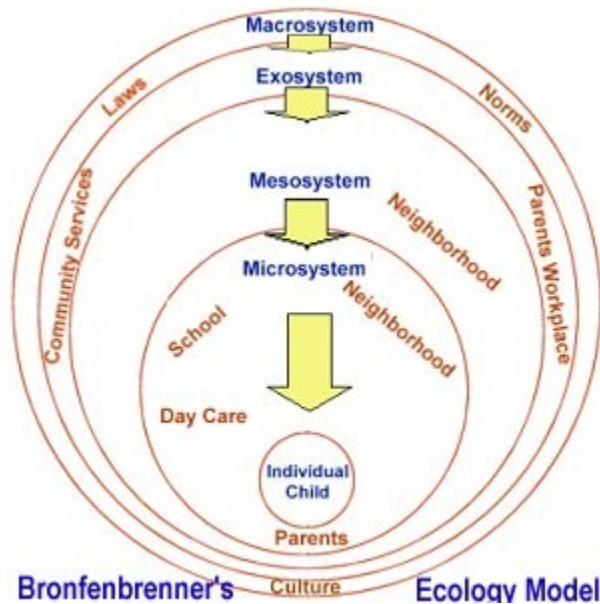
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individual directly, but influence a person who has a close relationship with the individual. The effects will generally trickle through to the center individual (1979).

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Lastly, the macrosystem, the largest of the four operating systems, contain the events of a larger group, culture, or country. This setting would include cultural, nationalistic, or religious identities that exist globally. For example, schools exist in hundreds of different countries around the world and share a common goal. However, the experience in each one of these schools would be unique to the individual involved, based not only on the individual's lower operating systems, but on the varying cultural and moral identities, as well (1979).

An illustrated example of Bronfenbrenner's ecology model can be seen below:



(Source: Witt, 2008)

Each system fans out from the original microsystem, and increases outwardly in complexity and reach. Because of the obvious overlap of systems described above, Bronfenbrenner argues that human beings require complex study that overlaps into a variety of environments, relationships, and interactions with other humans and institutions. Researchers “must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject (1979, p. 21).” Therefore, previous research in the behavioral sciences contains many flaws, as it usually tends to focus on only one type of social environment or immediate setting, and ignoring the events of countless other settings that exist within a person’s life (1979, p.18). Also, it is suggested that multiple human subjects should be studied simultaneously rather than on an individual basis, as it is the relationships that have the most impact on a human’s individual development. By examining a dyad, or two-person system, rather than a single individual within the ecological model, twice the amount of data can be gathered. When one event affects a member of the dyad, or an even larger group, researchers would also have the ability to record the ripple effects that would extend to other members of the micro and mesosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

While Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model is an extensive sociocultural view of development, several areas are still in need of integration. Researchers have cited a lack of adequate explanation regarding biological and

cognitive influences that may or may not have profound effects on individual development (“Ecological Theory,” n.d.). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model focuses heavily on environmental and external

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factors – so much so that he and other ecological theorists may have overlooked the importance and relevance of intrinsic biological drives that play a large role in development.

Also, very early into his description of the ecological system that harbors all human development, Bronfenbrenner admits that while a person’s ecological environment has a great effect on individual development, it is the individual’s perception of the environment that really matters – not how the environment actually exists in reality (1979).

Lastly, ecological systems theory does not address individuals who develop within extremely difficult environmental circumstances, such as severe poverty or abuse, and still go on to become a well-adjusted, successful members of the larger society. These individuals would appear to be anomalies within the system. How can ecological systems theory explain these individuals’ immunity to harsh external influences, while the majority of humans are irreversibly influenced, if not altered, by negative environments?

Even with its unanswered questions, ecological systems theory provides a solid, common-sense approach to the study of human development. Countless

studies since the bulk of Bronfenbrenner's research in the 1970's and 1980's have verified his idea of the larger environment having a direct correlation to human development. Researchers in the field of education can apply Bronfenbrenner's work to a variety of topics, such as the effects of a student's external environment on his or her academic performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effects of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement

Parental involvement in their child's education has been linked to increased levels of academic performance in the classroom (Angelides, Theophanous, & Leigh, 2006; Bobetsky, 2003; Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004; Watkins, 1997; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999; Patrikakou, 1997, 2004). According to Patrikakou (2004), increased levels of parental expectations for high academic achievement led to increased student achievement, as well as an increase in the amount of time spent completing homework outside of the classroom. This demonstrates the belief that parent expectations are very powerful, as they encourage students to excel academically (Catsambis, 2001). When a feeling a shared responsibility

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exists between school and home, valuable partnerships are constructed between teachers and parents (Christenson & Hurley, 1997). These partnerships go on to open the lines of communication between what were once considered two separate spheres of existence, and merge them into an overlapping environment in which students receive similar types of reinforcement and uniform messages regarding expectations and performance in school (Epstein, 1995; Patrikakou, 1997; Xu & Gulosino, 2006). When asked to rank the importance of parental involvement in their child's academics, the vast majority of parents viewed that their help was very important and a necessary component of their child's success (Drummond & Stipek, 2004).

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Due to the repetition of research findings indicating that parental involvement has a positive effect on student performance, the world of education is being integrated with family life. Whereas education and school once existed as a separate entity from other parts of the community, there is now a major push to intertwine all of the separate spheres of society into a solid, interdependent environment because of the obvious benefits for everyone involved (Bobetsky, 2003; Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999). According to Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry (2004), home-based family involvement in a child's education has been the strongest predictor of a child's motivation to learn and do well in school. Also, additional studies have

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demonstrated that a child's achievement can also influence and increase the level of parental involvement in school (Watkins, 1997).

In a continuation of Bronfenbrenner's work regarding the ecology of human development, Epstein (1995) introduced the concept of overlapping spheres theory to encourage a collaborative environment between each segment of a child's world. Epstein (1995) describes three main spheres that have the potential to either function together or separately, depending on the goals of society: school, family, and community. Epstein (1995) states that when the three spheres come together and work towards a common goal, such as improving a child's education, a "family-like school" can be created. With this type of environment, children would receive similar messages from school, home and community regarding expectations and achievement, thus increasing their frequency and effectiveness. Christenson (2004) also stated that applying the principles from ecological systems theory

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can improve a child's learning, as well as meet the demands of federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), when parents and teachers begin to consult with one another and build intervention practices for students.

Xu & Gulosino (2006) have found that the teacher-parent relationship is more important to assisting a student's achievement than the teacher's professional credentials. Teacher-parent relationships play a much more important role than otherwise thought, as Xu & Gulosino (2006) found that it is

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the teacher's involvement with the students and parents that determine the level of success, not the family's cultural or socioeconomic background. According to this research, actual credentials tell little about the teacher quality. The intense parent-teacher relationships that are implemented by the teacher cause student performance and achievement to go up, regardless of the level of teacher education or achievement (Xu & Gulosino, 2006).

Barriers to Effective Parent-Teacher Communication

Barriers between school, home, and community still exist and hinder attempts to increase parent-teacher communication. Often schools and teachers are the ones most frequently blamed for not initiating contact as soon as the school year starts. Many parents still believe that it is the responsibility of the teacher to make the initial contact home to report on how a student is performing (Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, & Jayanthi, 2001; Hawes, 2008; Thompson, 2008). Another common criticism of parents is that teachers wait

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until there are severe issues taking place at school before contacting home to provide feedback (Harniss et al., 2001; Hawes, 2008). Parents argue that communication should be ongoing throughout the year, and that feedback should be provided on a continual basis for both positive and negative events (Montgomery, 2005). Finally, while parents want their children to succeed in

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school, many believe that it is predominantly the school's responsibility to provide most of the instruction to their child (Montgomery, 2005). Many parents think back to their own childhood, failing to remember the advanced level of instruction and countless hours of homework, and wonder if the amount of work that their child is receiving from school is entirely necessary (Montgomery, 2005; Whitbread, Bruder, Fleming, & Park, 2007).

Educators have their own list of grievances regarding the traditional lack of parental involvement and communication with schools. Teachers have complained that parents often place their careers and social events before involvement in their child's education, leaving the vast majority of instruction and support solely to teachers (Sirvani, 2007). Also, the quality of character education and guidance that parents used to provide within the home has sharply diminished, leaving teachers to also implement instruction regarding societal interaction in addition to an already stuffed state curriculum (Christenson & Hurley, 1997). Parental involvement in groups that attempt to connect the school and community has also declined, breaking down what little communication once existed between the three major environmental spheres that exist in society (Epstein, 1995). Lastly, due to the advancements in subject curriculum, parents need to update their memories of fundamental knowledge and

skills, especially in mathematics and reading, so that they are able to provide help to their child at home (Crispin, 2008; Scott, 2007).

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Differences in socioeconomic status also create additional barriers between the fluency and frequency of communication between parents and teachers. Lareau (1987) found that low income parents were less likely to be involved in their child's education than parents of a higher income bracket. "Parents in the low-income community were also less familiar with school curriculum, engaged less in teaching at home, and were less likely to attend school events (Lareau, 1987)." Many parents also report feeling intimidated by school officials and viewing them as the enemy, as they are not accustomed to operating within school bureaucracy ("Electronic Education Report," 2001). Forming partnerships with teachers is a daunting task for many parents, as the level of formal teacher education is typically much higher than that of parents in inner-city demographics, and parents with a low level of formal education will often defer to what they see as teacher expertise (Lareau, 1994).

In addition, many parents have restrictions that keep them from interacting with their child's school as much as they'd like to, such as shift differentials at their place of employment, lack of reliable transportation, as well as physical and mental disabilities (Montgomery, 2005). These barriers can be broken down by utilizing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), as well as Epstein's overlapping spheres theory (1995). By bringing each section of the community together to form one, cohesive entity, students will receive increased consistency in their education (Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Epstein,

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1995; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999; Watkins, 1997). Relationships cultivated between school, community, and home can reduce many of the problems in education today, such as the lack of communication between teachers and parents, as well as the lack of involvement of parents at the middle school and high school levels (Desimone, 2001; Patrikakou, 2004; Xu & Gulosino, 2006).

A lack of teacher preparation programs creates further barriers to effective parent-teacher communication on the opposite end of the spectrum. While teacher education and training programs at the college level have become increasingly rigorous, most preparation pathways fail to include courses that adequately deal with teaching future educators how to effectively interact with parents once they enter into the field (Epstein, 1998; Montgomery, 2005). New teachers enter the world of education with volumes of knowledge on curriculum, standards, and methods, but little to no information on how to communicate and foster positive relationships with students and parents (Epstein, 1998). Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider & Lopez (1997) state that while schools are rapidly trying to increase parental involvement, teacher preparation lags far behind these school efforts. Most of their research revealed dismal teacher preparation programs in family involvement. In analyzing teacher credential programs, Shartrand et al. (1997) found that most programs did not have substantial training for family involvement, resulting in a “serious discrepancy that existed

between preservice preparation and the types of family involvement that teachers were increasingly expected to perform in schools (para. 3).”

Xu & Gulosino (2006) have found that parent-teacher relationships are far more important than paper credentials, yet colleges and universities fall short on delivering this information to future teachers. According to this study, credentials do not automatically equal success for students in the classroom, and that teacher practices determine the level of parent involvement in their child’s schooling, regardless of other external factors, such as race, culture, or socioeconomic status (Xu & Gulosino, 2006). Furthermore, the number of college credits earned, number of certifications, and level of education for the teacher tell little about the actual quality of the teacher in the classroom. However, when a teacher chooses to make the initial connection between school and home, and request parental involvement in his or her child’s education, the results have led to an increase in student achievement and performance at school (Patrikakou, 1997, 2004; Scott, 2007; Sexton, 1990; Sirvani, 2007; Watkins, 1997; Xu & Gulosino, 2006). This data raises several questions as to the effectiveness of current teacher preparation programs’ inclusion of techniques and instruction on how to deal effectively with parents in the field of education.

Efforts to Increase Parent-Teacher Partnerships

In order to meet the rigorous state and federal standards now in place, schools are attempting to once again bridge the gap between the environmental spheres of school and home. Communication and interaction between the two entities should be as seamless as possible for students to achieve the maximum level of success (Christenson, 2004; Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Epstein, 1995).

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In studying the most effective ways to open the lines of communication, Hawes, 2008 found that it is the teacher that should first initiate contact with parents. When surveyed, many parents believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to make the initial contact between school and home (Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, & Jayanthi, 2001). Teachers must provide easy methods for parents to quickly get in touch, as well as contacting home for positive events taking place in school (Patrikakou, 2004).

Once the initial contact has been made, most parents surveyed stated that they appreciated the feedback from their child's teacher, and are willing to participate in a more frequent dialogue (Scott, 2007). In order to make communication between school and home as effective as possible, teachers must maintain a positive and professional attitude when dealing with students and parents at all times. Expressed negativity on the teacher's behalf has shown to be a deterrent to successful parental involvement (Montgomery, 2005). The teacher's attitude in school-home communications is crucial in having parents

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become more involved in their child's academic progress (Xu & Gulosino, 2006). If the parent feels like he or she is part of a team atmosphere, then the parent will be more likely to participate in initiative between home and school. Hawes (2008) has found that "contacting a parent as soon one is aware of a serious academic or discipline issue" is necessary for productive parent-teacher communication, as this is the way to begin "a more positive and friendly dialogue with a parent (p. 328)." As stated earlier, a child's school can be an intimidating environment for many parents. In order to bridge the gap between school, home and

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community, teachers must utilize non-threatening techniques for incorporating parents into the educational fold (Montgomery, 2005).

There are a variety of programs designed to encourage and assist parental involvement in schools. Epstein (1995) has classified six types of parental involvement that schools can utilize: communicating, parenting, volunteering, learning at home, collaborating with the community, and decision making. By looking at these findings, schools can reach out to parents based on the method of interaction that they find most comfortable.

Participating in programs such as Head-Start, or school mentoring and tutoring programs, parents demonstrate the importance school has in daily life, and the value of performing well in school (Andrews, 2008; Scott, 2007).

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Depending on how education is valued within particular homes and communities, a school may already have plenty of parental involvement. However, as previously described in this paper, areas of lower socio-economic status and lower levels of formal education typically have less parental involvement in community schools (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Even with less traditional involvement from parents of low-socioeconomic classes, parents still rated helping their children with their academic studies ranked as a very high priority in their daily lives (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). Programs that incorporate educational training, government funding, and technology have been shown to not only increase parent involvement in their child's education, but increase the student's academic performance inside the classroom ("Electronic Education Report," 2001).

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The Head-Start pre-Kindergarten education preparation program was based partially on the research of Urie Bronfenbrenner and his ideas regarding ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999). Head-Start was designed to provide potentially "at-risk" children between the ages of three and four the opportunity to learn the skills that would be necessary upon entering Kindergarten. By involving children and parents in a school environment from an earlier point in development, both groups became accustomed to the routines and expectations of school up to two years earlier

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than if they had only enrolled in a Kindergarten program (Parker, et al., 1999). Benefits of the Head-Start program include an increase of student knowledge before enrollment in Kindergarten classes, as well as parental familiarity with their child's educational experience, as referred to as "school readiness" (Parker, et al., 1999). Parents and their children were more likely to appreciate the value and importance of education by participating in the Head-Start program (Parker et al., 1999).

The increased use of technology at home and in school has provided an excellent opportunity for easier and more frequent communication between parents and teachers. Both teachers and parents can utilize devices such as email, web pages, discussion forums, and so on, to keep in frequent contact with one another (Thompson, 2008). While there are often financial barriers to the availability and accessibility of computers for students and families with lower-socioeconomic status, the number of government and privately funded programs aimed at increasing accessibility to technology for citizens without home access to the Internet are increasing. In 2001, the Parent Act bill was introduced in the United States

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House of Representatives to improve parent-teacher communication and strengthen parent involvement in both the elementary and secondary schools ("Electronic Education Report," 2001). Advocates for this legislation cited the need for the breakdown of current communication barriers that exist in

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education. The National PTA, the group responsible for initiating the bill, pointed out that “studies have shown that parental involvement in a child’s education has more influence than the family’s socio-economic status, race, ethnic or educational background (“Electronic Education Report,” 2001, para. 3).” After passage of the bill, \$500 million dollars in grants were made available to public schools to implement parent-involvement activities, including technology programs that would help parents and teachers connect more often.

While the use technology has certainly facilitated and increased level of communication between teachers and parents, researchers are just beginning to analyze the characteristics of that communication. Thompson (2008) explains that while the use of computer-mediated communication has increased parental involvement in schools over the past ten years, the characteristics of parent-teacher emails are more ambiguous. Current analyses have revealed complex networks of messages as a result of the communication process. It is unclear as to whether or not parent-teacher email communication can always be considered a positive tool, as messages can often be misinterpreted or misconstrued, caused undue friction between teacher and parent. Lastly, while email communication provides a constant link to the teacher outside of school, many wonder if this is necessary, and is a potential violation of a teacher’s right to privacy (Thompson, 2008). More research is

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needed to determine the effectiveness of increased communication via email as the fluidity and frequency of messages between teachers and parents continue to increase with the implementation of technology.

A final effort to increase parent-teacher partnerships focus on assisting students academically. Many parents lament the lack of tools available to assist their child with homework completion, especially in mathematics (Andrews, 2008; Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, & Jayanthi, 2001). To remedy this problem, parent volunteer programs have been put into place across the United States and overseas (Scott, 2007). Sirvani (2007) states that parental involvement decreases at the middle and high school levels. Since many parents aren't able to commit to in-school volunteering, math teachers in an ethnically diverse high school in the southeastern United States studied the potential effect of sending grade reports home on twice per week to a small group of mixed performing students (Sirvani, 2007). Results showed that when the parents receiving the grade reports discussed the information with their child, it motivated the students to perform better in school.

Programs that require a time commitment from parents are also effective in increasing academic achievement in students. When parents were enrolled in a review program to refresh and update their mathematical skills in Great Britain, their children performed better in their math class at school (Andrews, 2008). In a more dramatic approach, a mandatory parental involvement program in mathematics was implemented in a Massachusetts school to boost student

achievement (Scott, 2007). The program included “a mandatory parent volunteer training in math content and student confidentiality, a year-long commitment to

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one hour per week, and parent placement in grades other than their child’s (Scott, 2007, p.47).” Initial findings indicated that parental commitment to school involvement not only benefited their child, but other students, as well.

In regards to homework completion, Jayanthi (1995a) identified six major homework-communication problem areas. They include: student initiation of the assignment, frequency and timing of the assignment, consistency of the homework routine, parental follow-through, and clarity and usefulness of teacher communication with the parent (Jayanthi, 1995a). Making sure that teachers and parents are aware of these potential problems areas will enable both parties to assist the student with easier homework completion. Coupled with remedies previous discusses, these issues that serve as barriers to homework completion can be easily removed (Jayanthi, 1995b).

Solutions

Parental involvement in their child’s education has been determined to be a crucial element in the child’s academic success (Epstein, 1995). Parent-teacher communication has been found to be a very effective tool to increase student academic performance (Hawes, 2008; Montgomery, 2005; Thompson, 2008). Measures that can be implemented to increase parent-teacher communication

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can include a variety of methods initiated by the teacher, such as sending home weekly grade reports, frequent notes or calls home, and the use of email, web pages, or message boards (“Electronic Education Report,” n.d.; Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, & Jayanthi, 2001; Hawes, 2008; Montgomery, 2005; Thompson, 2008).

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Communication between school and home should take place when both positive and negative events occur in the classroom (Montgomery, 2005). Teachers must maintain a positive outlook and dialogue when dealing with parents, regardless of their personal feelings, in order to maximize the benefits of the parent-teacher relationship that will, in turn, affect student performance (Montgomery, 2005). Additional funding from government and private organizations can assist with extending the accessibility of technology to families of lower socio-economic status, making computers and internet service available for online parent-teacher communication (“Electronic Education Report,” n.d.).

Summary

The teacher-parent relationship is often more important to improving student achievement than any other measure, regardless of student socio-economic status (Xu & Gulosino, 2006). Teachers must recognize that each student exists within its own individualized ecological environment, with a variety of forces affecting development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When a solid

teacher-parent relationship is established, it can provide additional adult reinforcement that assists student academic achievement outside of the school setting (Bobetsky, 2003). Frequent communication attempts to bridge the gap between schools and home, initiated by the teacher, have resulted in increased academic achievement in elementary, middle, and secondary school students (Epstein, 1995; Sexton, 1990). Further study is needed to determine which methods of communication are most effective.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms in this paper are defined below.

- 1.) *Ecological systems theory* – composed of four environmental areas: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Each system ranges from direct interaction with others to broad interaction with socio-environmental factors. It is also described as a sociocultural view of development (“Ecological Theory – Urie Bronfenbrenner,” n.d.)
- 2.) *Overlapping spheres theory* – composed of three main areas in society where humans function: school, home, and community. All areas work together for a common goal (Epstein, 1995).
- 3.) *Socio-economic status* – classification based on a family’s income, level of education, a social status in a community (“North Central Regional Educational Library”, n.d.)

TENTATIVE PROPOSAL FOR PROJECT II

The proposed action for Project II consists of studying the effects of parent-teacher communication on student academic achievement when email technology is utilized. Using the literature reviewed during Project I, the researcher is aware of the powerful link that can be developed between home, school, and community. According to this paper's conceptual framework, each part of a student's environment exerts influence over his or her development. Project II will examine communication between home, school, and community, and its effect on student academic performance.

A study of parent-teacher communication that involves email technology will be implemented for Project II. The goal will be to determine if a correlation exists between the frequency and productivity of parent-teacher email conversations and a student's academic performance.

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APPENDIX A

IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL