California State University, Monterey Bay

Digital Commons @ CSUMB

5-2021

Ways to Improve Parent Involvement in South Monterey County

Alma C Aguilar
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all

Ways to Improve Parent Involvement in South Monterey County

Alma Aguilar

LS 400 Senior Capstone

Dr. Ondine Gage

Liberal Studies Department

College of Education

California State University, Monterey Bay

Abstract

Parent involvement has a significant influence on education as it affects student academic success. This capstone project studies 19 parents, who are from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds in South Monterey County and 3 teachers, who either work or worked in South Monterey County. The purpose of this study is to answer the following question: "What affects parental involvement?" and "How can we improve parental involvement?" In order to find answers to these questions, I first conducted a review of the literature using peer-reviewed journals on parental involvement. As a result of my findings in the literature review, I surveyed both parents and teachers to learn more about what hinders local parents from being involved. What do they consider parent involvement to be? And what are some ways to improve parent involvement? My findings defined parent involvement as teaching manners and values, reading to children, going to parent-teacher, PTA, and ELAC meetings, and volunteering in their child's classroom. The common barriers found to affect parent involvement are lack of transpiration, need for childcare, work demands, language barriers, and busy schedules.

Key Words: Parental involvement, parent involvement, barriers, and different perspectives

Table of Contents

Ways to Improve Parent Involvement in South Monterey County

Drawing on my own experiences in school as a student and a volunteer during my service-learning courses, I realized that there is a great need for parent involvement. While reflecting on my experience in school, I realized that my parents were involved in my education. My parents would volunteer in my classroom, go to PTA meetings, show up for award ceremonies, go to sports events, read to us at home, or did other things that counted as parental involvement. Nevertheless, this has not been the case for others. Within my small community, I remember and still see up until this day that many parents cannot be involved in their child's education when it comes to school. For example, they cannot attend meetings and volunteer to go to school events due to barriers such as lack of time, no childcare, transportation, or work. As a future educator, I want to learn more about ways parental involvement can be supported and improved in my community. This capstone project will investigate what barriers impact parental involvement? How is parental involvement defined? What are the different cultural views parents and teachers have regarding parental involvement? How can schools and teachers in South Monterey County improve parental involvement? What are some resources schools can provide teachers and parents to improve parental engagement? And how can teachers and parents communicate more effectively?

Literature Review

With the aim to expand my understanding of what the parental involvement gap is and ways to improve it, I initiated my investigation by researching peer-reviewed journals and online articles that were either on the EBSCO database, Google Scholar, or on websites that either had .edu or .org on their URL. When viewing these peer-reviewed journals and articles, I focused on parental involvement and parent-teacher relationships. I also made sure to obtain articles relevant to today and that contained information about diverse races and ethnicities revolving around the topic of parental involvement. While conducting my research and reading the articles, I discovered that parental involvement dramatically influences students' academic success. I also learned about the barriers that affect or influence parental involvement.

Additionally, it is also important to note that the parental involvement gap is higher in upper grades. For instance, a 2018 article from ChildTrends.org states that in 2016, elementary schools had "84 percent" more parents involved in their child's education compared to middle schools, which had "76 percent" and high schools which had "73 percent" of parents involved (para. 3). Furthermore, this literature review will aim to define parental involvement and examine some barriers that contribute to and affect the parental involvement gap. Finally, this report will investigate ways to improve parental involvement in education, especially in South Monterey County.

Different Views On What is Parental Involvement

There are many barriers to parental involvement. One barrier would be the different expectations on what parental involvement is. Before expanding on the topic of parental involvement, we first have to understand what it is. First of all, we have to understand that there

are linguistically and culturally diverse people worldwide, which leads to many of them having different interpretations of what parental involvement is. According to LaRocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011), parent and family involvement is "defined as the parents' or caregivers' [investing] in the education of their children" (p. 116). Antony-Newman (2019), LaRocque et al. (2011), Olmstead (2013), and Waterford.org (2019) interpret parental involvement as parents being involved in their child's school activities and events positive parent-teacher relationships, volunteering, going to meetings, and so forth. In contrast, LaRocque et al. (2011) stated in their article that some believe that parental involvement is when parents are helping their child with homework, teaching them skills, manners, values, and more. Therefore, one barrier to parental involvement is the expectations around involvement and how it is defined.

Beliefs

Another barrier that influences parental involvement is the beliefs some parents and teachers have on parental involvement. For example, some parents believe that they should not be involved in their child's education because they view education as the teacher's job (Antony-Newman, 2019). There is also a social stigma that affects parents' views on getting involved in their child's education. Antony-Newman (2019) states that if parents are involved in their child's "school practices, they are labeled as 'too involved'" and if they are not involved enough, they are considered by teachers as "'hard to reach'" (p. 368). Arriaga and Longoria (2011) state that some parents might not get involved due to their past experiences with educators. Parental involvement is also influenced by the experiences parents had in school. For example, some parents' success or failure in school can impact how they assist their children in school and whether they will provide them with help (Antony-Newman, 2019).

On the other hand, some parents and teachers believe that their relationship affects parental involvement. Some teachers and parents believe that by having good parent-teacher relationships, parents and teachers can work effectively and collaboratively to facilitate students' learning and lead students to achieve academic success (Lee & Bowen, 2006). In other words, some teachers and parents believe that parental involvement plays a significant role in the development of children.

Transportation, Childcare, and Work

Transportation

Three barriers that affect parents getting involved in their child's education are transportation, childcare, and work. Some parents lack adequate transportation; therefore, it hinders them from participating in school activities or events (Arriaga & Longoria, 2011; Marschall & Shah, 2020). Some parents, who are considered low-income families or working class, are greatly affected by the lack of transportation because they cannot visit their child's school, go to meetings, school events, activities, etc. (Lee & Bowen. 2006, p.7). For some parents, the lack of transportation is seen as a barrier because some parents may not have cars or rides to attend events or meetings at their child's school. For other parents, regardless of whether they have a means of transportation, they must consider whether it is safe to travel to their child's school since some areas they have to travel through are unsafe areas (Arriaga & Longoria, 2011).

Childcare

Another barrier that goes hand in hand with transportation is childcare. Childcare is something parents struggle with. Without childcare, parents are not able to assist schools. For

instance, some minority groups or people who are considered within the low social, economic status are faced with the reality of not having childcare compared to individuals who are in the upper social class or who live in multigenerational homes (Turney & Kao, 2009; Marschall & Shah, 2020). This being said, individuals who are considered upper social class or who live in multigenerational homes have either someone at home to take care of their child/ren or pay someone to care for their children for them.

Work

Another barrier that parents face is that their work schedule interferes with their volunteering opportunities at school events and activities. According to Arriaga and Longoria (2011), parents sometimes have difficulty communicating and getting involved in their child's education due to work schedules. Some parents cannot attend school events because their work schedules conflict with school events' times (Olmstead, 2013). Parents cannot participate in their child's school events because they have to make an income. Some parents cannot attend school events because both parents work (Olmstead, 2013). Parents like single mothers or who work full time find it harder to attend school events or even get involved with their child's education because they have to stay behind at work (Turney & Kao, 2009). The following section will discuss language and communication amongst parents and teachers.

Language and Communication

Language

Two of the most influential barriers that affect parental involvement are language and communication, especially in diverse communities and amongst teachers and parents. For

instance, Asians, Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and others who do not have a common language between them and their child's teacher have a more challenging time communicating (Arriaga & Longoria, 2011; Fan et al., 2012). As noted by Lunenburg (2010), Arriaga & Longoria (2011), some individuals may face a lack of good communication skills. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that when there are no excellent communication skills, information taken in can be interpreted in different ways. LaRocque et al. (2011) stated that some parents have a more challenging time understanding sophisticated/professional language (p.199). There are a highly significant amount of immigrant parents who have trouble understanding what is being said to them, either because of the language barrier or because of the level of comprehension they have (Antony-Newman, 2019). Some parents have a hard time creating a good relationship and communication with their child's teacher since some teachers view parents as not that competent or intelligent because they are not dominant in the country's language (Antony- Newman, 2019). This is seen more with parents who are immigrants who do not speak the homecourts language (Antony- Newman, 2019).

Communication

Some of these barriers are not only seen by parents but also by educators. Some educators are also faced with the reality of not knowing how to communicate with parents effectively; for instance, some teachers are not given proper training or guidance on how to communicate with parents and how to make sure the way they are communicating with them is understandable (Antony-Newman, 2019). Another barrier that both teachers and parents face is how they can communicate through different communication platforms. Some parents are faced with not understanding or translating newsletters, articles, or messages that teachers provide through various media platforms. For example, for some parents, one source of communication is not

effective as others since sometimes teachers send complex messages that can be communicated through a quick phone call or text, etc. (Thompson et al., 2015). While on the other hand, teachers find it uncomfortable or unnecessary when parents use social media platforms to contact them (Thompson et al., 2015). In sum, communication may be a barrier complicating parental involvement.

Sibling Order and Gender Influences

Sibling Order

While parental involvement affects their child's academic success, Cabus and Ariës (2017) found that some parents are more involved in their older children's education compared to their younger children. For instance, the older children (firstborn) get much more attention and care from their parents, and their parents seem to be more involved in their education (Cabus and Ariës, 2017). In comparison, younger siblings receive parent care and attention but less than what the older siblings do (Cabus and Ariës, 2017).

Gender Influences

Cabus and Ariës (2017) also state that gender influences what parent is more involved with who. For instance, fathers are more likely to be involved in their children's education if they are males, while mothers are likely to be involved in their children's education no matter what gender their children are (Cabus & Ariës, 2017). Therefore, family dynamics are also a factor in parental involvement. Now that the barriers that influence or affect parental involvement and the different viewpoints of what parental involvement is have been stated, the next section will discuss ways to improve it.

Ways to Improve Parental Involvement

Given the barriers described, there are multiple ways in which parental involvement can be improved. Rivera and Lavan (2012) state that by having parents visit their child's classroom, they can expand their knowledge and learn ways to assist their child at home. Schools implementing more programs in which parents can get involved in and out of the classroom with other parents can improve parental involvement (Rivera & Lavan, 2012). Rivera (2012), LaRocque et al. (2011) and Olmstead, (2013) emphasize the need for schools to provide parents and teachers more training on how to create an excellent positive parent-teacher relationship, how to better communicate with one another, and how to work effectively to assist students better. Another effective way to improve parental involvement and communication is through providing resources to parents such as "memos, newsletters, letters, reports" and other communication platforms, so some parents are aware of the news about their child and school events (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 2-3; Marschall & Shah, 2020; Thompson, 2015).

Conclusion

In summary, the research done in the literature review section found that parental involvement is defined differently by both parents and teachers due to the different perspectives they have on it. Findings also showed that parental involvement is sometimes impacted by barriers such as cultural differences, lack of transportation, time, and childcare needs. Communication and family dynamics were also found to be an influence on the ways parents engage in their child's education. The research also found that parental involvement could be improved by providing resources and providing training for parents and teachers to learn how to communicate with each other for the child's academic well-being. The following section turns to

the investigation of parental involvement in South Monterey County to better understand what

impacts this community and what measures should be taken to improve parental involvement.

Methods and Procedures

Given the critical findings discussed in the literature review section above regarding

parental involvement, this section will investigate parental involvement in South Monterey

County. First, I investigated the educational context in South Monterey County to understand the

cultures and language represented. Then I conducted a qualitative survey to understand what

parents and teachers consider parental involvement to be. I sought to investigate the different

views parents and teachers have on parental involvement, what barriers affect parents, the

importance of communication and relationships between teachers and parents, as well as ways to

improve parental involvement.

Context

South Monterey County includes the towns south of Salinas along Highway 101. The

towns in South Monterey County are "Chular, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, San

Lucas, San Ardo, and Bradley" (Community Foundation for Monterey County, par. 4). The

majority of the people who live in South Monterey County are Hispanic/Latino (Community

Foundation for Monterey County). Agriculture is highly significant to this area since many

individuals work in agriculture and live in South Monterey County. The languages spoken by

people living in this county are Spanish, English, Mizteco, Triqui, Filipino, Arabic, Gujarati,

Cebuano, and other indigenous dialects (EdData.org).

To answer the questions of "what people see parent involvement to be? What are the

barriers that parents face? How can schools and teachers improve parental involvement in South

Monterey County? What are some resources schools can provide teachers and parents to improve

parent engagement? How can teachers and parents communicate more effectively?" I decided to

conduct three surveys. The first survey was sent out to teachers, the second and the third survey

were sent out to parents who either spoke English or Spanish or both. The questions that were

asked in the survey that teachers took can be seen in Appendix A, and the second and third

surveys taken by parents can be seen in Appendix B and C. The questions in the surveys were

based on the information found in the literature review. The questions in the survey were created

to know more about parents' and teachers' perspectives on parental involvement.

Participants

Following Dornyei's (2007) qualitative research method, I drafted a survey documented

in Appendix A, B, and C. The survey was administered to 3 teachers and 19 parents. The

teachers who participated in this survey are elementary teachers who represent 3 different

schools in South Monterey County. There was 1 male teacher who identified as White and had

been teaching for 13 years. There were 2 female teachers who both identified as Hispanic/Latino;

the first teacher has been teaching for 6 years while the second teacher has been teaching for 15

years. The survey was administered to parents who have children currently in school, of whom

14 are working parents, and 5 are stay-at-home parents. As for the parents who participated in

the study, there are 3 males and 16 females who identified as Hispanic/Latino. Data was

collected on a total of 22 participants.

Procedures

In order to administer my survey, I designed the questions by examining prior research to

investigate whether parents and teachers in our South Monterey County context had the same

perspective as I had found in my literature review. While the questions were not exactly the same, I wanted to understand how teachers' and parents' perspectives on parental involvement are the same or different. I also wanted to examine the strategies used in the literature to improve parent involvement compared with the strategies used in the South Monterey County context.

Parent Survey Design

The survey parents took contained 18 questions, including 3 open-ended questions and 12 Likert scaled questions. The questions can be seen in Appendix B and C.

Teacher Survey Design

There were 16 questions created for the survey I administered to teachers. The teachers' survey contained open-ended questions, multiple-choice, and one ranking question. The complete survey is presented in Appendix A.

All three surveys were administered through the Qualtrics website. All participants were participants of convenience, whom I know in the community. I first contacted them through text before emailing them the survey link to be sure they were willing to participate. These participants are all from South Monterey County. The survey was opened for a week for participants. Once I obtained the survey results, I created a spreadsheet to analyze the responses better and to better answer my primary and secondary questions.

Findings and Discussion

In the next section, I will address the response to the survey questions to understand the perspective of parents and teachers with regards to parental involvement in school. In many

ways, parents and teachers agreed that parental involvement is essential; however, they had

different definitions of parental involvement, barriers, communication, and suggestions.

What is Parental Involvement?

Parents' Perspective

As stated in the literature review section above, parents and teachers have different views

on parental involvement. Based on the findings, 100% (19) of parents defined parental

involvement as teaching your child manners and values. Second, 52% (10) indicated it was

volunteering in their child's classroom, and 78% (15) reported it was completing forms and

responding to the communication sent home from their child's school. Finally, 74% (14) reported

that parent involvement is reviewing their child's homework together. Seventeen parents said

parent involvement was attending parent-teacher conferences, 63% (12) parents reported it was

reading at night to your children. Six (31%) parents reported parent involvement was joining the

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, while 6 (32%) believed it was attending the English

Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings. While conducting the study, one parent stated

that parent involvement is also "enseñarles a los hijos cosas de la vida y habilidades" (showing

our children things about life and skills).

Figure 1.

Parents' Views On What Is Parental Involvem
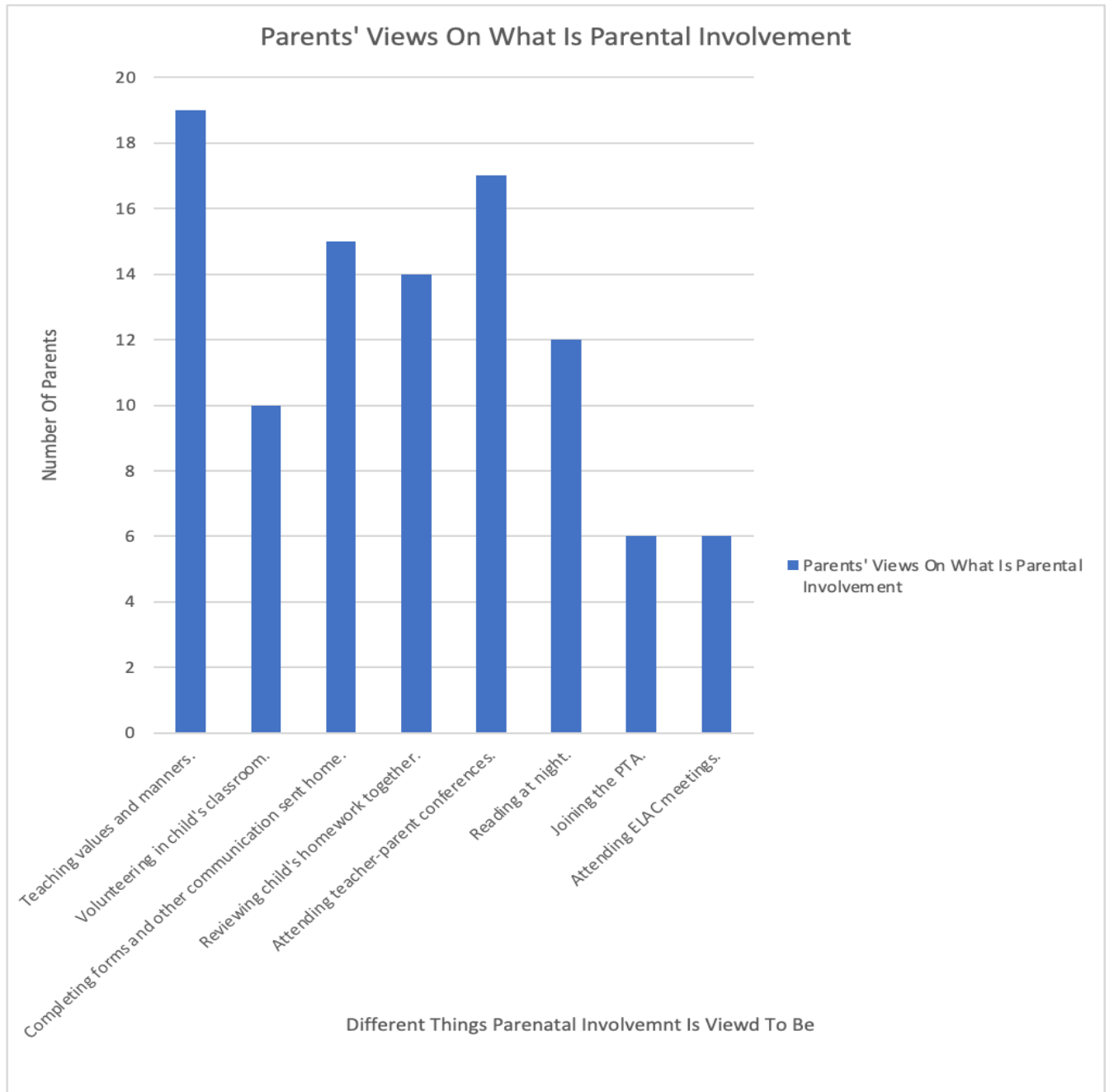
Note. This chart shows what 19 parents believe parental involvement to be. The information in this chart is relevant to the study because it shows how parents within one ethnic group view parental involvement differently.

Teachers' Perspective

On the other hand, all three teachers' definitions of parent involvement were similar to the parents' definitions. Parental involvement, according to the teachers, was when (1) parents volunteer in a classroom, (2) making sure children complete homework, (3) parents correcting homework with children, and (4) reading to their child at night. Furthermore, all three teachers believed that responding to the communication sent home from the school and attending parent-teacher conferences was considered parent involvement. Lastly, only 2 teachers felt that parent involvement was joining PTA meetings and attending ELAC meetings

Figure 2.

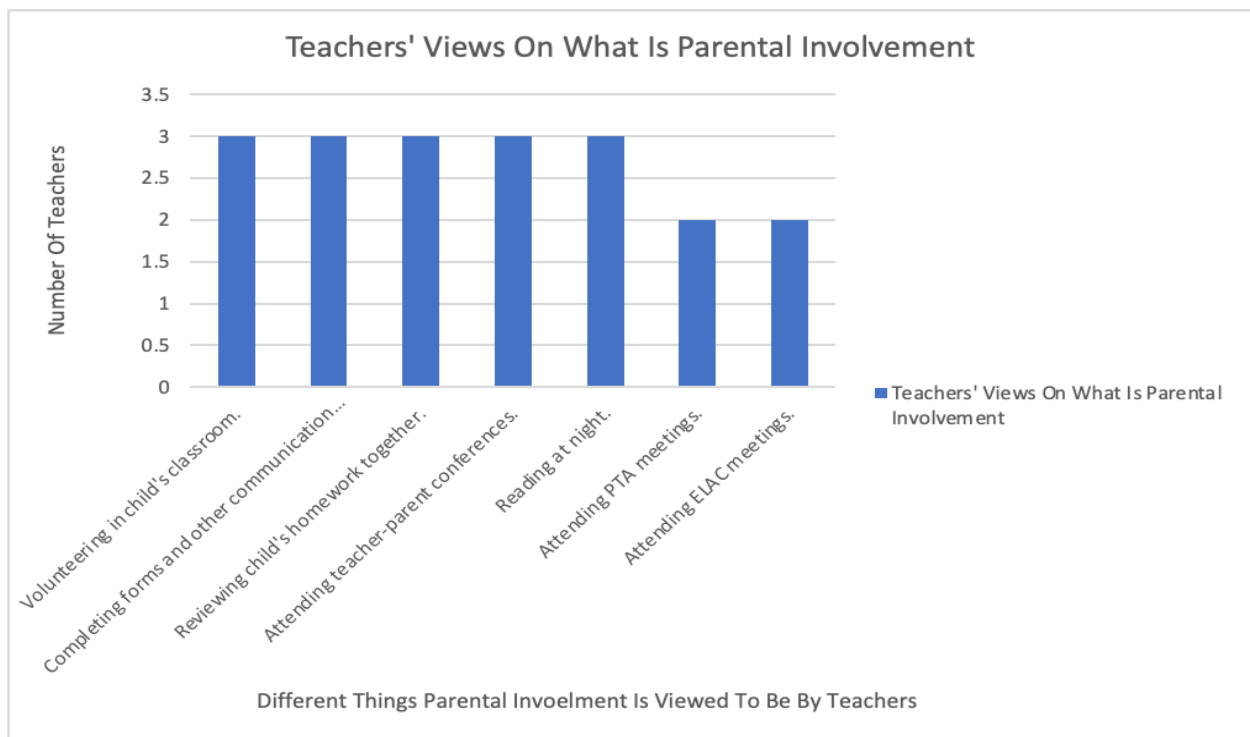*Teachers' Views On What Is Parental Involvement*

Note. This chart shows what three teachers classify parental involvement to be. The information in this chart is relevant to the study because it shows what teachers think parental involvement is compared to parents' perspectives.

The Importance Of Parental Involvement

Parents' Views

In response to how important parental involvement is, 79% responded that parental involvement is "highly important," while 21% responded that parental involvement was "important." Furthermore, 79% and 21% respectively viewed parental involvement as "highly important" and "important" to children's learning. Given these responses, it is clear that parents recognize the value of their involvement.

Teachers' Views

Likewise, when teachers were asked similar questions, they also valued parental involvement as "highly important;" however, as noted above, teachers defined parental involvement differently from the parents in this study. They also responded that parent involvement "strongly influences" student success.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

The survey questions that were asked investigated both parents' and teachers' responses as to what are the most significant barriers to parental involvement.

Barriers Parents Face

Regarding the barriers that parents reported, the number one barrier was work reported by 63% of the parents. The second most significant barrier was having a full schedule reported by 36% of the parents. The third most significant barrier was language barriers reported by 26% of the parents. Transportation was the fourth barrier reported by 11% of parents. The fifth barrier

that 11% of parents reported was not having access to information. Childcare was reported as the

sixth barrier by 5.3% of parents. Lastly, 5.3% of parents reported not having access to the

internet as the seventh barrier that affects them from being involved in their child's education.

Barriers Teacher Think Parents Face

Among the teachers, the bilingual teachers perceived that the top barriers were work

demands and childcare needs. They viewed language barriers as high but less prominent. The

monolingual teacher perceived that language barriers were the most significant deterrent to

parental involvement but also viewed work demands and lack of childcare as among the other

highest barriers.

Communication Amongst Parents And Teachers

Questions pertaining to issues in communication found two common themes. These two

common themes were barriers that teachers and parents faced, which influenced how they

communicate with one another. The other theme was what methods of communication they used

to communicate with each other.

Parents' Communication

When parents were asked what language they spoke, 84% (16) of parents responded that

they were bilingual in Spanish and English, while 26% (5) reported they only spoke Spanish.

Parents were asked if they had a language barrier; 73% (14) of parents reported that they did not

because they could communicate effectively with their child's teacher because they were

bilingual. While 26% (5) of parents reported, they did have a language barrier. Parents who

reported that they had language barriers reported it was because they did not share a common language with their child's teacher or spoke broken English.

In the survey, parents were asked to report what means/methods they use to communicate with their child's teachers: 68% (13) reported they used phone calls to communicate with their child's teacher, 57% (11) reported they used text messaging to communicate, 57% (11) reported they communicate through emails, 26% (5) reported they used Zoom to communicate, and 11% (2) reported they communicated through social media apps. Other sources of communication that parents reported using were Parent Square, Class Dojo, and fliers.

Figure 3.

Methods of Communication Used By Parents

Methods Of Communication Used By Parents

- Phone Calls
- Text Messages
- Social Media Apps
- Email
- Skype
- Zoom
- Reminder 101
- Others: (Parent Square)
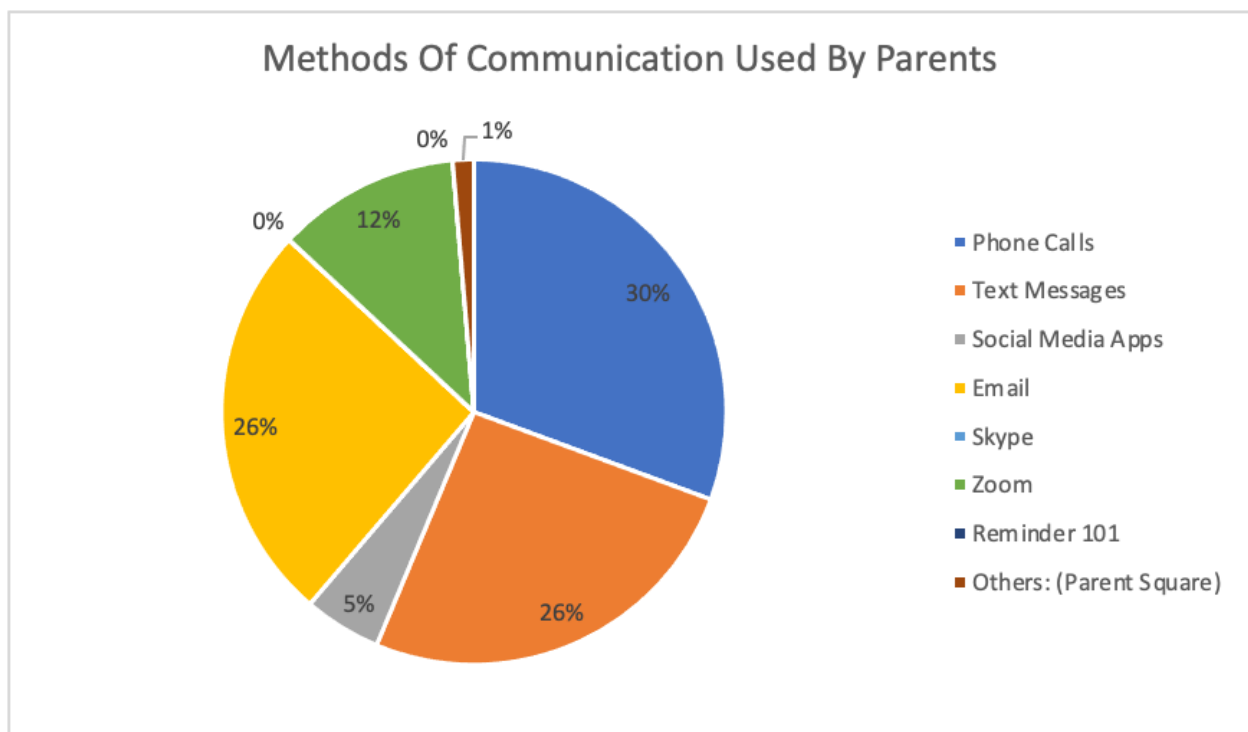
Note. This pie chart illustrates how many parents use different communication platforms in order to communicate with their child's teacher.

Teachers' Communication

The participating teachers in this study were asked similar questions as the partners. When asking teachers if they believed that parents had language barriers, all 3 teachers responded that parents did have language barriers. Teachers stated that two of the language barriers that they think parents encounter are feeling uncomfortable when asking questions about their child and not being able to communicate due to a lack of translators.

Within the survey, teachers were also asked what forms/methods of communication they used to communicate with parents; 100% (3) responded that they communicated through phone calls, text messages, email, and zoom, and 33% (1) of teachers responded they used social media apps. Two teachers (67%) responded that they use Parent Square as another form of communication to communicate with parents.

Figure 3.

Methods of Communication Used By Teachers
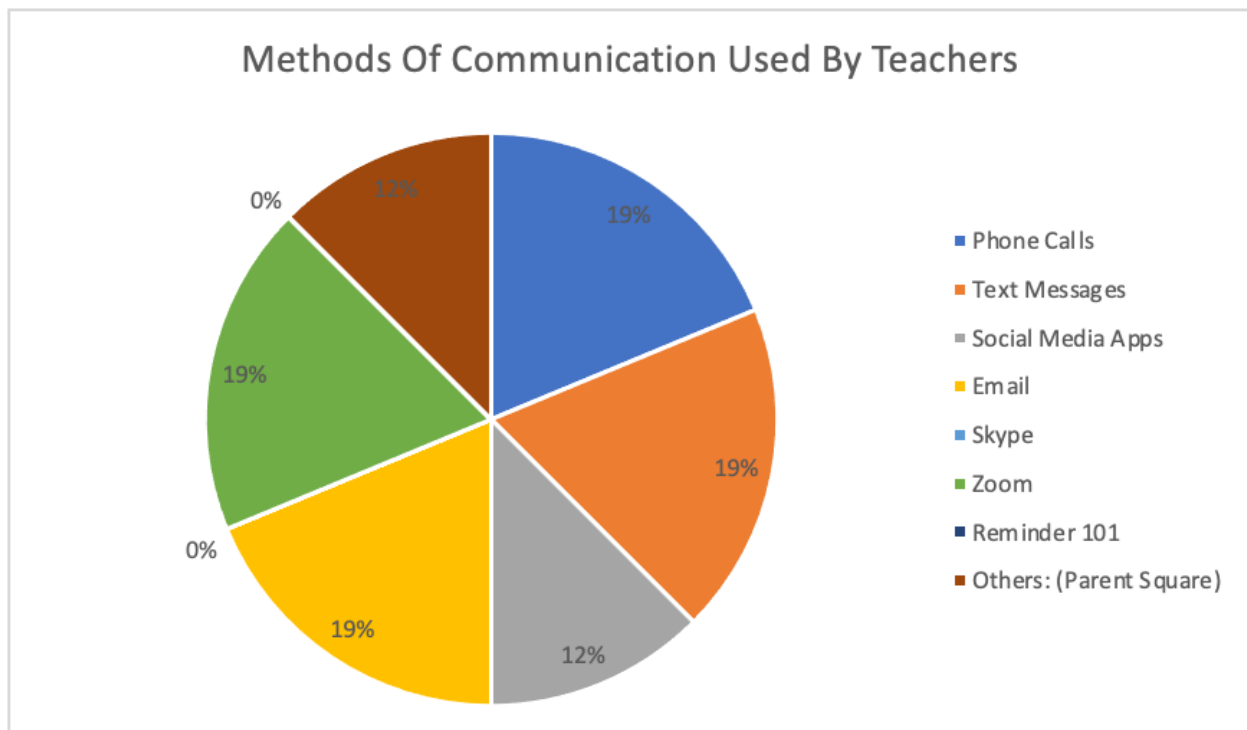
Note. This pie chart represents the different platforms or methods of communication used by teachers when communicating with parents.

Parent-Teacher Relationships

In order to study parent-teacher relationships further, parents were asked the importance of having parent-teacher relationships and how comfortable they felt communicating with their child's teacher and vice versa.

Parents- Teacher Relationships

Parents were asked how comfortable they felt when communicating with their child's teachers in either English or Spanish, to which 63% (12) of parents responded they felt "very comfortable" communicating in either English or Spanish. Thirty-one percent (6) of parents responded "neutral," meaning they did not feel comfortable nor uncomfortable speaking in English and Spanish, and 5.3% (1) reported they felt "comfortable" speaking in English or Spanish with their child's teacher. Parents were then also asked if they felt overall comfortable communicating with their child's teacher, to which 63% (12) of parents responded they felt "very comfortable" communicating with their child's teacher. Twenty-six percent (5) responded "neutral," they did not feel comfortable nor uncomfortable communicating with their child's teacher. One parent (5.2%) responded that they felt "comfortable" speaking to their child's teacher, and 5.2% (1) reported feeling "uncomfortable" communicating with their child's teacher.

Lastly, parents were asked how important it was to have an excellent parent-teacher relationship with their child's teacher. To this question, 47% (9) of parents respond that it was "highly important" to have a good relationship with their child's teacher, 42% (8) reported that it

was "important." In comparison, 11% (2) reported that it was "neutral," meaning that it was not very important or non-important to have a good relationship with their child's teacher.

Teacher- Parent Relationships

Teachers were asked similar questions. Teachers were asked if it was essential to build a relationship with their students' parents. To this question, 67% (2) of teachers reported that it was "extremely important" to build a relationship with their students' parents, and 33% (1) of teachers reported that it was "important" to build a relationship with their students' parents. Teachers were then asked if having a good teacher-parent relationship would improve parent involvement. Two teachers (67%) reported that they "strongly agreed" that having a good teacher-parent relationship can improve parent involvement and 1 (33%) teacher reported that they "somewhat agree" that having a good teacher-parent relationship can improve parent involvement. Lastly, teachers were asked if having a good teacher-parent relationship would make parents feel comfortable and improve their parental involvement. All 3 teachers agreed that having an excellent teacher-parent relationship with their students' parents would improve parents' comfortability and parental involvement. Following the response to this question, some teachers stated that parents are more likely to come to school events, school activities and ask questions regarding their child's education if they are comfortable with the teacher. They also stated that establishing a relationship with the parents makes them feel like they have "permission" to be more involved.

Parents' and Teachers' Suggestions For Parental Involvement

Parents and teachers were asked to share what types of things they would like to see in order to improve parental involvement. Both parents and teachers had multiple suggestions to improve parental involvement.

Parents' Suggestions

Parents were asked how beneficial it would be to attend training or get some support from teachers and schools to be more involved in their child's education. Six parents (32%) responded that it was "extremely beneficial," 10 (53%) responded it would be "beneficial," and 3 (16%) responded it would be "neutral," meaning not extremely beneficial nor unbeneficial. We asked parents what were some things they felt schools could do to improve parental involvement. When asked this question, many parents gave different suggestions to improve parental involvement. Parents responded the following: 1) Schools and teachers should have more flexible hours for events or meetings since parents have different schedules due to employment, 2) have video or phone conferences that can work with parent schedules, 3) get biweekly progress reports about child's grades and behaviors, 4) let parents know about friendly programs or workshops that would promote parental involvement and help students develop their learning, 5) bring guest speakers (former students) to school events in order to motivate parents and let them see what their parental involvement can accomplish, 6) have teachers inform and remind parents about different events happening at school over a phone call or text instead of sending fliers home, 7) provide school events in parents' preferred language if possible, 8) have more interpreters at meetings or events, 9) provide help and support for parents in order for them to understand what their children are getting taught, and ways to assist their children with schoolwork.

Teachers' Suggestions

Teachers were asked how much it would benefit parents and them to have training on how to communicate with one another, to which 33% (1) stated it was "very beneficial" and 67% (2) stated it was "beneficial." Lastly, teachers were asked to suggest methods that would improve parental involvement; all three teachers had different suggestions. The suggestions they gave were:

1. Being able to meet all parents at the beginning of the school year (having a small orientation) can help build strong relationships.

2. Having more translators in (Spanish, Triqui, and other languages) would help improve the language barrier.

3. Schools should have technology, training, curriculum overviews, and biweekly updates more accessible to parents to promote parent involvement.

4. Having more extensive outreach from involved parents to other parents in order to motivate other parents to be more involved in their child's education.

Discussion

The focus of this study was to determine what affects parental involvement along with ways to improve parental involvement in South Monterey County. The data collected within this study found that parents and educators have similar views on parental involvement, what barriers affect it, the importance of having good parent-teacher relationships, and communication. Through the multiple surveys conducted on parents and teachers, the results suggested that parent involvement is critical since it is vital to the academic success of students and the relationship between parents and teachers. The results also indicated that many parents and

teachers believe that parent-teacher relationships influence their engagement in their child's

education. Both parents and teachers viewed parental involvement as teaching children manners,

values, volunteering in the classroom, responding to the communication sent home, working on

homework with their child, reading to their child, attending conferences (teacher-parent

conferences, PTA meetings, and ELAC meetings). The findings in this study also demonstrated

that communication such as language barriers, busy schedules, and work were the top barriers

parents and teachers faced. After reviewing and analyzing the findings, I was surprised to see

that parents and teachers both had similar yet different suggestions on ways to improve parental

involvement, like having flexible hours, communicating through different platforms, having

more translators, and so on. I was surprised to see that the findings in the study were similar to

the findings in the literature review section of this project.

Limitations

After reviewing and analyzing the study's data, there were a couple of limitations. One

notable limitation was that the data that was collected was not from multiple diverse ethnicities.

Not having participants from various ethnic groups limits the survey because the data collected

will only be based on one ethnic group. The following limitation is the relatively small sample

size; this is a limitation because if the sample size were to be bigger, it would increase the data's

quality. The third limitation is that fewer teachers participated in the study compared to how

many parents participated. If more teachers had participated in the study, there would be more

data on parental involvement from the teachers' perspective. Another limitation I encountered

was that there was not much data collected based on how parent experiences in school influence

parental involvement. Lastly, as a university student, this was the first time I have ever done a

capstone project; therefore, it was challenging for me to put it together and group the information

obtained through intensive reading and the data conducted through the surveys by themes.

Recommendations

After reviewing the information found in the literature review and the findings section,

my recommendations would be to conduct more research on how parents' experiences in school

influence parental involvement. My next suggestion would be to look more into programs or

training that schools can provide teachers and parents with in order to communicate with one

another and work together to help their children academically succeed in school. My third

recommendation would be to provide multiple opportunities for parents to get involved in school

events and provide these opportunities based on the flexibility of the parents. The fourth

recommendation I would make would be to provide transportation, translators, and childcare for

parents so they can attend meetings and school events. The last recommendation would be to use

different forms of media to make these opportunities accessible for all parents and families of

children. I believe that researching and finding ways parents and teachers can work together can

help improve students' education, communication, and relationships between parents and

teachers.

In completing this capstone project, I have fulfilled two Liberal Studies' Major Learning

Outcomes (MLOs). These two Major Learning Outcomes are MLO 3 (Innovative Technology

Practitioner) and MLO 4 (Social Justice Collaborator). MLO 3 was fulfilled through the

extensive use of technology, research, and investigation on parental involvement. By doing

extensive research in the literature review, methods, and findings sections and through the use of

technology, I was able to learn how to conduct and create surveys on Qualtrics, how to use

databases such as the CSUMB Library, and how to effectively look for articles on EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and the internet.

 Major Learning Outcome 4 was fulfilled by doing adequate research about the ways parents and teachers interpret parental involvement differently, the solutions and suggestions to improve parental involvement, barriers parents face that hinder them from being involved in their children's education, and the ways schools and teachers can help and work effectively with parents to improve parental involvement and help with students' academic success. After obtaining the information found in this capstone project I plan to utilize it in the school I will work at as well as in the district I will work for. I will utilize the findings to make sure I can do my best to help parents be more involved in their child's education, create more opportunities for parents to participate in, and find better ways to improve future parent-teacher relationships and communication.

Conclusion

 In conclusion, the literature review and extensive research study above showed that parents and teachers have similar views on parental involvement such as: teaching manners and values, reading to children, going to parent-teacher, PTA, ELAC meetings, and volunteering in their child's classroom. The information obtained also suggested that the most common barriers that affect parent involvement are lack of transpiration, need for childcare, work demands, language barriers, and busy schedules. The information presented in this project shows how vital parent involvement, teacher-parent relationships, and communication between parents and teachers are to students' academic success. After conducting the study, it is notable that parent involvement has a significant impact on education. This project demonstrated how impactful parent involvement is in education and ways to reinforce it. Throughout this study, along with

the questions provided to participants, participants were able to choose their answers based on

their opinions and reflections on life experiences with being a parent or a teacher. Lastly, this

capstone project will help improve parental involvement in South Monterey County.

References

Antony-Newman, M. (2019). Parental involvement of immigrant parents: a meta-synthesis.

   Educational Review, *71*(3), 362–381.

   https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/00131911.2017.142327811

Arriaga, X., & Longoria, Z. (2011). Implementation Intentions Increase Parent–Teacher

   Communication Among Latinos. *Basic & Applied Social Psychology*, *33*(4), 365–373.

   https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/01973533.2011.614142

Cabus, S. J., & Ariës, R. J. (2017). What do parents teach their children? – The effects of

   parental involvement on student performance in Dutch compulsory education.

   Educational Review, *69*(3), 285–302.

   https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/00131911.2016.1208148

Community Foundation for Monterey County. "South Monterey County Nonprofit Landscape

   study."

   https://www.cfmco.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Southern-Monterey-County-Landsca

   pe-Study-Summary.pdf

Dörnyei, Z. (2007) Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. p. 300-304.

EdData.edu. "Deneen Guss Ed.D." *Ed*,

   www.ed-data.org/district/Monterey/Monterey-County-Office-of-Education.

Fan, W., Williams, C., & Wolters, C. (2012). Parental Involvement in Predicting School

   Motivation: Similar and Differential Effects Across Ethnic Groups. *Journal of*

   Educational Research, *105*(1), 21–35.

   https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/00220671.2010.515625

How parent involvement leads to student success. (2019). Waterford.org

    https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvment-leads-to-student-success/

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. (2011). Parental Involvement: The Missing Link in

    School Achievement. *Preventing School Failure*, *55*(3), 115–122.

    https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10459880903472876

Lee, Jung-Sook, & Bowen, Natasha K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the

    achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research*

    Journal, *43*(2), 193–218. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312043002193

Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). Communication: The process, barriers, and improving effectiveness.

    Schooling, *1*(1), 1-10

Marschall, Melissa J, & Shah, Paru R. (2020). Linking the Process and Outcomes of Parent

    Involvement Policy to the Parent Involvement Gap. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills,*

    Calif.), *55*(5), 699–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916661386

Olmstead, C. (2013). Using Technology to Increase Parent Involvement in Schools. *TechTrends:*

    Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning, *57*(6), 28–37.

    https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11528-013-0699-0

Parental Involvement in Schools. (2018). ChildTrends.org

    https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/parental-involvement-in-schools

Rivera, L., & Lavan, N. (2012). Family Literacy Practices and Parental Involvement of Latin

    American Immigrant Mothers. *Journal of Latinos & Education*, *11*(4), 247–259.

    https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15348431.2012.715500

Thompson, B. C., Mazer, J. P., & Flood Grady, E. (2015). The Changing Nature of

Parent–Teacher Communication: Mode Selection in the Smartphone Era. *Communication*

Education, *64*(2), 187–207.

https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/03634523.2015.1014382

Turney, K., & Kao, G. (2009). Barriers to School Involvement: Are Immigrant Parents

Disadvantaged? *Journal of Educational Research*, *102*(4), 257–271.

https://doi-org.csumb.idm.oclc.org/10.3200/JOER.102.4.257-271

Appendix A

1. Where do you work?

   a. Preschool or Head Start

   b. Elementary School

   c. Middle School

   d. High School

   e. Other

2. How important is parent involvement?

   a. Highly Important

   b. Important

   c. Neutral

   d. Slightly Important

   e. Not Important

3. Check all answers below which define parent involvement in student learning:

   a. Volunteering in the classroom

   b. Completing forms and responding to communication sent home from the school

   c. Checking on student homework and making sure it is completed

   d. Reviewing student homework with their children

   e. Attending parent teacher conferences

    f.   Reading at night with children

    g.   Joining the PTA

    h.   Attending English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings

    i.   Other definitions:

4. How much do you think parent involvement influences student success?

    a.   Strongly influences

    b.   Influences

    c.   Neither influences nor impairs

    d.   Slightly influences

    e.   No influence

5. Do language barriers affect teacher-parent relationships? Yes/No, why?

    a.   Yes, because

    b.   No, because

6. How important is building a relationship with your students' parents?

    a.   Extremely important

    b.   Very important

    c.   Moderately important

    d.   Slightly important

    e.   Not at all important

7. Does having a good teacher-parent relationship improve parent involvement?

    a.   Strongly agree

     b.   Somewhat agree

     c.   Neither agree nor disagree

     d.   Somewhat disagree

     e.   Strongly disagree

8. What are some valid reasons/barriers that hinder parents from being involved? Rank them from 1-10. (In order to rank them, drag the options up or down.)

     a.   Language barriers

     b.   Transportation

     c.   Childcare

     d.   Work

     e.   Has a full schedule

     f.   Does not see involvement with school as their job.

     g.   Does not have access to information.

     h.   Does not have access to internet

     i.   Does not have an understanding of the importance of parent involvement.

     j.   May be disengaged in their child's education.

9. Can having a good teacher- parent relationship make parents feel more comfortable and improve parent involvement? Yes/No, why?

     a.   Yes, because

     b.   No, because

10. What methods/apps are useful to communicate with parents?

     a.   Phone calls

     b.   Text messages

    c.   Social media apps

    d.   Email

    e.   Skype

    f.   Zoom

    g.   Remind 101

    h.   Others:

11. How beneficial would communication training be to improve parent involvement?

    a.   Very beneficial

    b.   Beneficial

    c.   Neutral

    d.   Slightly Beneficial

    e.   Not Beneficial

12. What types of methods do you use or think will help improve parent involvement?

    a.   Type here:

Appendix B

1. Are you a working parent or a stay-at-home parent?

    o Working parent

    o Stay at home parent

2. What languages do you speak?

    o Spanish

    o English

    o French

    o German

    o Korean

    o Dialect

    o Other:

3. Check all answers below which define parent involvement in student learning:

    o Teaching your children manners

    o Volunteering in your child's classroom

    o Completing forms and responding to the communication sent home from your

    child's school

4. Checking and helping your child with homework and making sure it is completed

    o Reviewing your child's homework together

    o Attending parent-teacher conferences

    o Reading at night with your child/ren

    o Joining the PTA

    o Attending English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings

    o Other:

5.   How important is parent involvement to you as a parent?

    o Highly Important

    o Important

    o Neutral

    o Slightly Important

    o Not Important

6.   How important to your child's learning is being involved in school activities?

    o Very important

    o Important

    o Neutral

    o Slightly important

    o Not important

7.   How comfortable are you speaking with your child's teacher in English?

    o Very Comfortable

    o Comfortable

    o Neutral

    o Slightly uncomfortable

    o Extremely uncomfortable

8.   How comfortable do you feel when communicating with your child's teacher?

    o Very Comfortable

    o Comfortable

    o Neutral

    o Slightly uncomfortable

    o Extremely uncomfortable

9.   Do you have a language barrier when speaking to your child's teacher?

    o Yes, because

    o No, because

10. Having a good relationship with my child's teacher is:

    o Extremely important

    o Important

    o Neither important nor unimportant

    o Slightly important

    o Not important

11. Would it be beneficial for schools to provide training/support for parents so that they

can learn how to communicate and reach out to their child's teacher and school

effectively?

    o Extremely beneficial

    o Beneficial

    o Neutral

    o Slightly beneficial

    o Not beneficial

12. Check the following barriers which most impact your involvement in your child's

education:

    o Language barriers

    o Transportation

- o Childcare

- o Work

- o Having a full schedule

- o Lazy

- o Disengaged in your child's education

- o Don't have access to the internet

- o Don't have access to resources

- o Don't have access to information

- o Other barriers:

13. How do you communicate with your child's teacher or ways you would like to

communicate with them?

- o Phone calls

- o Text messages

- o Social media apps

- o Email

- o Skype

- o Zoom

- o Others:

14. What was your experience going to school like?

- o Excellent

- o Good

- o Neither good nor bad

- o Bad

      o Horrible

15. What are some things schools can do to improve parent involvement?

      o Type your response:

Appendix C

1. ¿Es usted un padre que trabaja o un padre que se queda en casa?

   o Padre que trabaja

   o Padre que se queda en casa

2. ¿Qué idiomas habla?

   o Español

   o Ingles

   o Francés

   o Alemán

   o Coreano

   o Dialecto

   o Otro:

3. Marque todas las respuestas a continuación que definen la participación de los padres en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes:

   o Enseñar modales y valores a sus hijo/a

   o Ser voluntario en el salón de clases de su hijo/a

   o Completar formularios y responder a la comunicación enviada a casa de parte de la escuela de su hijo/a

   o Revisar y ayudar a su hijo/a con la tarea y asegurarse de que el/ella la completen

   o Revisar juntos la tarea de su hijo/a

   o Asistir a conferencias de padres y maestros

   o Leer por la noche con sus hijos

      o Unirse a la PTA (el programa de Padres, Maestros, y Alumnos)

      o Asistir a las reuniones del Comité Asesor de Aprendices de Inglés (ELAC)

      o Otro:

4.   ¿Como padre qué importancia tiene para usted la participación de los padres?

      o Muy importante

      o Importante

      o Neutro

      o Ligeramente importante

      o No es importante

5.   ¿Qué importancia tiene para el aprendizaje de su hijo/a que usted participe en las

actividades escolares?

      o Muy importante

      o Importante

      o Neutro

      o Ligeramente importante

      o No es importante

6.   ¿Qué tan cómodo se siente hablando con el maestro/a de su hijo/a en Inglés o

Español?

      o Muy cómodo

      o Cómodo

      o Neutro

      o Ligeramente incómodo

      o Extremadamente incómodo

7. ¿Qué tan cómodo se siente al comunicarse con el maestro de su hijo?

    o Muy cómodo

    o Cómodo

    o Neutro

    o Ligeramente incómodo

    o Extremadamente incómodo

8. ¿Tiene una barrera del idioma cuando habla con el maestro/a de su hijo/a?

    o Si, porque

    o No, porque

9. Tener una buena relación con el maestro/a de mi hijo es:

    o Extremadamente importante

    o Importante

    o Neutro

    o Ligeramente importante

    o No es importante

10. ¿Sería beneficioso para usted que las escuelas brindar entrenamientos / apoyo a los padres para que puedan aprender a comunicarse con el maestro/a de sus hijos?

    a. Extremadamente beneficioso

    b.   Beneficioso

    c.   Neutro

    d.   Ligeramente beneficioso

    e.   No es beneficioso

11. Marque las siguientes barreras que más impactan su participación en la educación de su hijo/a:

- Barreras del idioma

- Transporte

- Cuidado de niños

- Trabajo

- No tener espacio en el dia

- Perezoso (Flojera)

- No tiene interés de participar en la educación de su hijo/a

- No tengo acceso a la Internet

- No tengo acceso a recursos

- No tengo acceso a la información

- Otras barreras:

12. ¿Cómo se comunica con el maestro de su hijo/a o las formas en que le gustaría comunicarse con ellos?

- o Llamadas telefónicas

- o Mensajes de texto

- o Aplicaciones de redes sociales

- o Correo electrónico

- o Skype

- o Zoom

- o Otros:

13. ¿Cómo fue su experiencia cuando iba a la escuela?

- o Excelente

- o Buena

- o Ni bien ni mala

- o Mala

- o Horrible

14. ¿Qué pueden hacer las escuelas para mejorar la participación de los padres?

- o Escriba su respuesta: