Parental Involvement in Education: Attitudes and Activities of Spanish-Speakers as Affected by Training

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Abstract

This study compared school-related attitudes and activities of Spanish-speaking parents who participated in the Parent Resource Person Group (experimental group N = 47) with those who did not (control group N = 84). Low response by culturally and linguistically diverse parents to surveys is often misinterpreted as a lack of interest in their children's education. The author maintains that parents' lack familiarity with schools and resources and schools' lack culturally appropriate research methodology and cross-cultural sensitivity. Study subjects received surveys, calls, and postcards in Spanish. A small sample (N = 8) participated in telephone interviews. Findings revealed that the group receiving parent liaison training participated in a wider variety of school-related activities more frequently. Language and cultural issues impact the type and frequency of parental involvement. Non response does not equate with not caring.

Introduction

All parents care deeply about their children's education and academic progress. Indeed, for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents education ranks as a priority. Darder, Torres, and Guiterrez (1997) state that "education is highly regarded as the social and economic equalizer, and as a prerequisite to improving the social and economic status of Latinos" (p. 68).

> Schools cannot work if there is no input from the community in the educative process . . . The problem often is that immigrant minority parents have no sense of how to become involved nor do they have concrete input, how to operationalize their dream. Nor is there sufficient

or effective effort made to involve them. The middle class majority remains unmindful of how to overcome reluctance on the part of ethnic or working class parents who must discomfort themselves by entering into unfamiliar group processes wherein they feel lack of equal status. (De Vos & Suarez-Orozco, 1991, pp. 8-9)

Low CLD involvement is often misinterpreted as parents not caring about their children's education. Cardenas and Cardenas (1977) point out that "an erroneous myth still persists that minority cultures do not have an interest in their children" (p. 20). In addition, low response by CLD parents to surveys used for research purposes is equated with this lack of interest in their children's education. Chvkin (1989) says "it will require a concerted effort to debunk the myth that minority parents don't care about their children's education" (p. 123).

According to Epstein (1986) "it is not only the responsibility of the parents to help their children succeed in school, but also the responsibility of the school to make the appropriate connections with LEP parent" (p. 15). Adjustment to a technologically advanced society requires that immigrants have "high motivation and clear rewards. The process of adjustment is contingent on the motivation level and the preparation (social and cultural knowledge) possessed by the family and the institutional responsiveness to the needs of the children and their families" (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991, p. 11).

As some school systems attempt to implement family and parental involvement programs, others are expanding existing ones. Specific strategies may include parental visits to the school, use of parents as volunteers, communication from school to home, assistance in home-based strategies (Epstein, Swap, Bright, Hidalgo, & Siu, 1995), and the use of parents as liaisons to other parents (Halford, 1996; Robledo Montecel, 1993; U.S. Dept. of Education, 1997).

In Maryland, some schools have established Parent Resource Person groups, a parent liaison and outreach program for the CLD population. The groups offer participating parents in their native language an enhanced ability to access information from appropriate resources, such as the local school system, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), county agencies, and incentives to participate in school and other education-related activities. Group facilitators work to enhance parents' understanding of the importance and effectiveness of the parental role in their children's education, and parents become empowered and gain skills to advocate effectively for their children's educational future.

The Study

This study sought to answer two questions: Does participation in a Parent Resource Person Group increase parent involvement? Is information misleading because the research methods used do not take into consideration the socio-cultural background of participants? The study compared school-related attitudes and activities of Spanish-speaking parents who participated in the Parent Resource Person Group training workshop in MCPS, a large suburban school district, with those parents who did not receive training.

Theoretical Framework

Parents have long been acknowledged as the first teachers of their children (Berger, 1995; National School Boards Association, 1988; Violand-Sanchez, Sutton, & Ware, 1991). An essential component of student success has been attributed to parental involvement in children's school-related activities (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1997). Bronfenbrenner holds that cognitive, affective, and social development of children is enhanced by parent participation in school-related activities (Harry, 1992). Research over the past thirty years substantiates the impact that parental involvement has on student achievement (Epstein, 1986, 1990; Henderson & Berla, 1997), and the role that parental involvement plays in the schools is rapidly expanding and is an integral part of the movement for educational reform.

> "[Parents], most of whom care deeply about the achievement and future of their children, but are unfamiliar with the system of education in the United States, do not understand how they are expected to relate to it, and do not know how or where to find assistance." (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 15)

Parents, communities, and schools must forge true partnerships, and work to develop the potential that our nation's children possess as they grow into moral and educated adults. In order to do this, schools must gain the trust of parents (Comer, 1991; Moll et al, 1992).

Bermudez (1994) lists benefits to be gained by involvement of CLD parents: "Benefits for students include (a) improved student academic achievement, (b) increased language achievement, (c) improved overall school behavior and attendance, (d) sustained achievement gains, (e) improved attitudes and interest in science among adolescents, and (f) increased cognitive growth" (p. 7). However, a lower level of parental involvement in the schools has been associated with Latino, African-American, and Asian-American parents, as well as parents of lower socioeconomic status (Ascher, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1993).

Many factors affect the success of parent involvement initiatives. Literacy in the home language and English, "length of residence in the United States, English language proficiency, availability of support groups and bilingual

staff and [the families'] prior experiences" (Violand-Sanchez, Sutton, & Ware, 1991, pp. 7-8) all affect school and family attitudes. While issues of language and literacy serve as a practical limitation, an exhibited lack of understanding of cross-cultural issues among personnel might estrange parents.

The Parent Resource Person Group used in this study assumes bilingual or multilingual parent liaisons who support school staff by serving as a link to the home and acting as a "two-way cultural conduit between teachers and families" (Halford, 1998, p. 35). As these liaisons direct parents to appropriate resources, parents can develop specific parenting skills that can enhance their children's achievement in school. Parents also learn to decipher a new culture of schooling, in which learning approaches may differ fundamentally from those to which they are accustomed (Halford, 1998).

Emerging research on CLD parental involvement is mostly qualitative and deals with small groups of parents (Godina-Silva, 1997; Mora, 1996; Roche, 1997; Turriago, 1995). While a description of parental involvement needs is evolving, surveys and interviews with parent groups, such as the one in this study, should also illuminate more specific needs of education organizations as they redesign and enhance programs for parents. Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) explain the essential components of such programs:

> The concept of empowerment . . . links psychological processes (internalization of knowledge through critical thinking) with the social reality in which the individual functions. . . . The ability of parents and their children to acquire new knowledge about the social reality of the United States, and to do this through text, is truly a significant emancipatory event. The reason is that knowledge has been inaccessible to parents previously because of the double barrier of their illiteracy and their lack of the English language.

Barriers to parent involvement

Spanish-speaking parents face barriers when they attempt to involve themselves in the education of their children in U.S. public schools (Cardenas & Cardenas, 1977; Swap, 1993; White-Clark & Decker, 1996). Many Spanish-speaking parents do not come to traditional school programs such as back-to-school night because of factors that affect all parents: work schedules, transportation, baby-sitting issues, and lack of time (Martila & Kiley, 1995; Swap, 1993; White-Clark, 1996). Barriers specific to CLD parents include: (a) the language barrier and/or the inability to function effectively in English; (b) discomfort levels with an unfamiliar and intimidating education system; and (c) a perception that they are not wanted (Chavkin, 1989). Additionally, parents may have difficulty in helping their children with homework if they do not know the mainstream language, curriculum, and/or expectations of the school system. Parents may also struggle when trying to communicate with school personnel.

Literacy also impacts the ability of these parents in many school-related tasks including homework and home-school communication. Garcia (1995) indicates that "fifty-six percent of Hispanic [immigrants] are functionally illiterate, compared to 46% for Blacks and 16% for Whites" (p. 374). Parents may need training to negotiate the sensitive cultural, linguistic, and educational issues they face in U.S. schools.

To address these issues, along with challenges that educators face when they attempt to increase levels of parent involvement, some schools have implemented an organized effort to involve parents in school. Particularly successful in language minority communities have been programs to train parents as liaisons. One such program is the Parent Resource Person Group. This eight-week program trains parents to be active participants and advocates in their children's education and to share these skills as community liaisons.

This study supported the efficacy of a workshop to facilitate skills including parenting, communicating, volunteering, involvement at home, decision making and advocacy, and community collaboration. The parent involvement model incorporated into this study as it had applicability to CLD parents was developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein and adopted by the National Parent Teacher Association.

Sociocultural background of participants.

Spanish-speaking cultures typically demonstrate a strong commitment to family and a strong concern with their children's well being, including success in school. The interplay between home culture and school culture is often not taken into account, whereas acknowledgement and understanding of cultural factors is helpful for both home and school. A myriad of interwoven factors must be considered when dealing with cross-cultural issues. Garcia (1999) clarified the intricate relationship that exists between language, cognition, culture, human development, and teaching and learning; "Socio-cultural theory acknowledges how all of the elements relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities throughout history and, in current society, influence how schools respond to students because the school is part of society" (Garcia, p. 216)

The dichotomy between parent concern and the low response rate to survey questions of some studies in CLD parent involvement might suggest a research methodology that did not address sufficiently the social, linguistic, or cultural background of participants. For example, were surveys written only in English, or were they translated into other languages? Were they equitably distributed? Were parents literate, did they understand survey techniques, and did parents of all educational levels understand test-taking directions? Just as languages and cultures vary widely, research methods used in the United States can differ from those used in other countries, as can patterns of response. Marin and Marin (1991) illuminated issues that arise when doing research within the Hispanic community.

Since the issues of content and methodology are unmistakably intertwined, research conducted with CLD populations must recognize these confounding factors and aim to control them. An understanding of the culture of the respondents is necessary to ascertain the impact on research and to heighten awareness of response patterns. It was the researcher's aim to create a research design that both examined the issues and considered the impact of culture upon these issues to achieve a model whose results could drive positive change. These concerns led directly into the methodology utilized in the study.

Methodology

Research Questions

Major questions guiding this study involved evaluating the success of Parent Resource Person Training to determine whether a significant difference exists in (a) The attitude towards school, (b) school-related activities, and (c) opinions between parents who have participated in a workshop and those who have not. Table 1 lists essential research hypotheses. The operational definitions used in the study are available in Appendix A.

Table 1

Essential Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1	Research Hypothesis 2	Research Hypothesis 3
There is a significant difference in the attitude towards school between Spanish-speaking parents who have participated in a workshop and those who have not.	There is a significant difference in the school-related activities of Spanish-speaking parents who have participated in a workshop and those who have not.	There is a difference in the opinions of Spanish-speaking parents who have participated in a workshop and those who have not.

Subjects

The sample (see Appendix B) included fluent, Spanish-speaking parents of students who received services from the English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Division (ESOL) in MCPS, a large suburban school district in the Washington, D.C. area. Experimental group members participated in the Parent Resource Person Group and received training in parental involvement strategies; the control group did not. The control sample was random and taken from the ESOL student registration list to include: (a) only parents of Spanish-speaking students; (b) schools with similar demographic composition; (c) schools that had not received ESOL parent training; and (d)

schools that did not have an aggressive, in-house program of parental involvement. All parents were sent a survey in Spanish.

Following the receipt of the surveys by the researcher, a small sample of parents was chosen for a telephone interview. This interview sample consisted of four parents from each group whose survey score was high or low for both attitude and activity (two high-raters and two low-raters for control, and the same for experimental).

Procedure

This researcher prioritized sensitivity to cultural and language issues, because they strongly impact research content and methodology. Two specific areas targeted were translations of an English-language survey document and the selection of research methods to yield the largest pool of responses from parents. Of the 119 surveys sent to the experimental group, 47 (33.9%) were received. Of 200 surveys sent to the control group, 84 (42.0%) were received. It can only be conjectured that the lower response rate for the experimental group could be attributed to relocation, non-delivery of mail, or lack of interest. A small sample of survey respondents was chosen for a telephone interview. This interview sample consisted of four parents from each group whose survey score was high or low for both attitude and activity (two high-raters and two low-raters for control, and the same for experimental) and coded for themes including attitude and activity and emerging themes such as community connectedness. A native Spanish speaker trained by the researcher conducted the interviews.

In an attempt to develop a culturally appropriate methodology, the survey instrument was carefully translated, the study provided assistance to encourage response, and a follow-up interview with selected parents enhanced the explanation of survey results. The inclusion of this oral language component was also appropriate for a culture that possesses a strong oral tradition and that may include illiterate participants. According to Swap, a "combination of methods is often useful to reach diverse groups, such as parents who do not speak or read English, have no telephone, or do not have a permanent address" (Swap, 1993, p. 162).

Instruments

The survey adapted from Epstein-Salinas (1993), consisted of three sections totaling 21 items and used a Likert scale of 4. The attitude section had five questions, and the activity section had 16 questions; 13 demographic items also were included. Translation of the instrument followed a rigorous course in an attempt to devise an effective and sensitive instrument. The following describes the sequence that led to the final Spanish version of the survey: First, Dr. Joyce Epstein provided several Spanish language versions of the survey that had been used by other school systems or

researchers (Epstein, 1998); and, then, careful review and compilation of these versions and others were prepared and given to a certified translator, who developed the final version. Attention was paid to clarity and readability level for a range of countries and educational backgrounds, and questions were reviewed by representatives of the various regions represented by Spanish speakers in MCPS.

Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with eight parents to enrich the data and enhance and supplement the survey results. This researcher developed 11 interview questions, including open-ended, close-ended, and semi-structured response items (see Appendix C).

Statistical Methodology

This non-experimental ex post facto study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) used both quantitative and qualitative research methods and is considered to have elements of a mixed-method study. The survey portion was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including the frequency of numbers and percentages (also mean and standard deviation), were used to report demographic characteristics of respondents. Inferential statistics included the independent *t*-test and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A qualitative method of analysis, coding of themes, was used to analyze the respondents' answers to a combination of semi-structured and open-ended interview questions posed during telephone interviews.

While the actual response rate was slightly below the standard acceptable response for the mainstream population, it is the researcher's opinion that it is nevertheless a respectable response for a culturally and linguistically diverse, Spanish-speaking population. Standard response rates, as well as methodological flexibility, need to be established for diverse populations to resolve this issue. An extended research model may better serve the needs of the growing multicultural parent body and assist schools in hearing their voices.

Results

A significant difference was found between the experimental and control groups for four of the five attitude items: (a) "This school is very good"; (b) "The teachers are interested in my child"; (c) "My child is learning as much as he can in school"; and (d) "This is one of the best schools for students and parents" (See Table 2).

No significantly higher attitudes were detected in the experimental group; indeed, in four domains, parents' attitudes in the experimental group were lower than the control group. Trainees may have had raised expectations and, thus, slightly lowered opinions of school after their workshops (Guillen, 1999) or they may have taken the workshop to help resolve existing problems. Or,

Table 2

Comparisons of Attitudes Towards School of Experimental and Control Group

Attitudes	Groups	M	SD	t	p
This school is very good.	Experimental	3.41	.73		
				-3.36	.001*
	Control	3.80	.40		
The teachers are interested in my child.	Experimental	3.31	.76		
				-3.26	.002*
	Control	3.72	.48		
I feel good about the school.	Experimental	3.48	.66		
				-1.55	.124
	Control	3.65	.55		
My child is learning as much as he can in school.	Experimental	3.36	.75		
				-2.46	.016*
	Control	3.68	.54		
This school is one of the best for students and parents.	Experimental	3.15	.67		
				-4.10	.000*
	Control	3.62	.58		
* Denotes significance at the .05 level.					

Note: In the Likert scale used in Table 2, a 1 represents "strongly disagree" and a 4 represents "strongly agree."

possibly, the control group may have positive feelings about their schools because of a newcomer's aura of positive attitude (Garcia, 2000). It is also possible that because the survey introduction came from the ESOL department, they may have viewed the questions as relating to that department rather than to schools in general, and parents' satisfying relationships with ESOL teachers could have skewed the results.

For these attitude items, the control group showed higher agreement (higher mean) than the experimental group. The item not statistically significant was, "I feel good about the school." Generally both groups had a high level of satisfaction with the schools; the control group was only slightly higher.

A significant difference (supporting this study's second hypothesis) was found between the experimental and control group for six of 16 activity items with the experimental group having a higher agreement (higher mean) as follows: (a) "I talk with my child's teacher at school"; (b) "I talk to my child's teacher on the phone"; (c) "I go to PTA meetings"; (d) "I go to special events at school"; (e) "I take my child to the library"; and (f) "I tell my child how important school is" (see Table 3).

Table 3

Comparison of School-Related Activities of Experimental and Control Groups

Activities	Groups	M	SD	t	p
1. I talk to my children about school.	Experimental	3.78	.42		
				1.88	.064
	Control	3.61	.62		
2. I visit my child's classroom.	Experimental	2.64	.79		
				1.11	.270
	Control	2.48	.80		
3. I read to my child.	Experimental	2.80	.78		
				-.59	.554
	Control	2.90	.90		
4. I listen to my child read.	Experimental	3.24	.74		
				.13	.901
	Control	3.22	.82		
5. I listen to a story my child wrote.	Experimental	3.23	.81		
				1.32	.190
	Control	3.00	.98		
6. I help my child with homework.	Experimental	3.37	.77		
				.46	.644
	Control	3.30	.83		
7. I practice spelling or other skills for a test with my child.	Experimental	3.05	.80		
				.91	.364
	Control	2.89	1.05		
8. I talk with my child about a TV show.	Experimental	3.15	.78		
				.60	.552
	Control	3.06	.82		
* Denotes significance at the .05 level.					

Table 3 (cont.)

Comparison of School-Related Activities of Experimental and Control Groups

Activities	Groups	M	SD	t	p
9. I help my child plan time for homework and chores.	Experimental	3.43	.70		
				.57	.572
	Control	3.35	.76		
10. I talk with my child's teacher at school.	Experimental	2.80	.81		
				2.11	.037*
	Control	2.47	.86		
11. I talk to my child's teacher on the phone	Experimental	2.20	.81		
				2.60	.011*
	Control	1.77	.93		
12. I go to PTA meetings.	Experimental	2.53	.99		
				2.88	.005*
	Control	2.03	.92		
13. I check to see that my child has done his/her homework.	Experimental	3.68	.56		
				.87	.390
	Control	3.59	.63		
14. I go to special events at school.	Experimental	3.33	.76		
				5.50	.000*
	Control	2.46	1.00		
15. I take my child to the library.	Experimental	3.21	.91		
				4.80	.000*
	Contol	2.35	1.03		
16. I tell my child how important school is.	Experimental	3.91	.28		
				3.83	.000*
	Control	3.60	.64		
* Denotes significance at the .05 level.					

Note: In the Likert scale in Table 3, 1 represents "never," and 4 represents "many times."

Interview data expanded upon the survey findings. Themes of attitude and activity were coded and analyzed to illuminate the survey. An example from a workshop participant (experimental group) illustrates the link between attitude and activity: "[Now I am] seeing how important it is for parents to be involved in school" and "[I will] take on more responsibilities." This was not revealed in the survey results.

Moreover, the comments in the interviews of the experimental and control groups showed a qualitative difference. Interviewees from the training group shared activities that spanned the range of the Epstein typology more thoroughly than their counterparts in the control. Interview comments of control group parents generally expressed satisfaction with the schools, such as, "they are always there to answer my questions." However, the scope of control group parent activities described in the interviews was more limited than that of the experimental group. Comments from the parents who participated in the training are listed in Appendix D.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study demonstrate that the Spanish-speaking parents who participated value being involved in their children's education and, given training in skills to navigate an unfamiliar school system, seek to overcome barriers that prevent them from doing so. This study supported the efficacy of a workshop to facilitate skills, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, involvement at home, decision making and advocacy, and community collaboration. Those parents who received training exhibited a significant difference in school-related activities compared to those without training.

Results did indicate that parents who participated in the workshop and received the training participated at a higher rate and in a wider range of activities. Parents attending the workshop identified and defined specific needs, had knowledge of specific strategies, and were ready to assume an advocacy role. Items that were statistically significant included: going to PTA meetings, utilizing the library, and encouraging the children about the importance of school. All of these items were topics included in the workshop curriculum.

Follow-up interviews supported these findings. Comments of the experimental group were focused and demonstrated knowledge of a wide variety of activities and problem-solving strategies for the parents to implement. The extent of their activities and the mention of specific strategies may be attributed to the training received in the workshop. Overall, the remarks of the control group in follow-up interviews were neither as comprehensive nor as specific as those of the experimental group, which may indicate the control group's lack of information about the process of parental involvement. Their responses provide compelling information that parents do care and offer good ideas on practical and affective levels. Schools would do well to listen to the voices of the parents.

The atmosphere of empowerment and mutual respect exhibited in the workshops gave rise to learning "how to reach parents, develop new strategies, evaluation methods, [and] resources that we have and how to use them," as one participant explained it. According to the workshop coordinator, these findings were an indication that parents heeded the workshop message (L. Guillen, 2000); these parents went to school, talked to the teachers, and told their children how important school was.

Parents who were interviewed in this study voiced a commitment to each other, as well. Many parents said they participated in the Hispanic committee at school and called other parents to encourage attendance. Parents expressed a strong sense of community responsibility: "networking within the community," "communicated with other parents," and " being active with the children and the community" were phrases that emerged during the interviews.

The rapidly growing number of CLD students requires schools and educators to find new ways to improve education for these students. Failure to do so will have far-reaching, detrimental effects on our society and our economy—students without a solid educational base will not be equipped to find employment in an increasingly technological work place. Research indicates that parent involvement is key to student success (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1997); thus, rather than dismissing CLD parents as uninvolved or uncaring, educators must also find ways to stimulate parent involvement. By respecting these parents and their cultural contributions and showing them that their involvement was welcome, parents could become strong collaborators and facilitators of improvement.

In addition, non-biased and culturally responsive research methodology is essential as schools systems reach out to CLD persons. More research is needed in this critical area, particularly quantitative data that will help further funding for these important programs.

The motivation of CLD parents is validated through Cummins' (1996) observation that "Culturally diverse parents [have a] strong desire to contribute to their child's education . . . [These parents] care passionately" (p. 8). The power of the community, coupled with the individual desire to help their children succeed, indicates the strengths that can be garnered from further pragmatic research on parental involvement. School systems can facilitate parental involvement by providing advocacy training and by reaching out to CLD families. A collaborative partnership between parents and educators can make a difference.

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Appendix A

Operational Definitions

Activity	Parenting, communicating, volunteering, home learning, advocacy and decision-making, and community collaboration (Epstein-Salinas, 1993).
Attitude	Opinions and "feelings" (Epstein, 1998) of parents towards school.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)/ Limited English Proficient (LEP)	A person for whom the English language is not the dominant language spoken. Identifies individuals from homes and communities where English is not the primary language of communication (Garcia, 1999). Cultural variants may exist independent of language.
Dominant Language	The language used more often and/or with which the speaker has greater proficiency (Baker, 1993).
Parent	The significant caregiver, one who has primary responsibility for, and lives with the child: family member or guardian (Swap, 1993). "Parents include all family members and adults who are the primary caregivers for our children" (Flood, Lapp, Tinajero, & Nagel, 1995, p. 617).
Parental Involvement	Action or interaction that is taken by a parent toward his or her child to support the educational goals of children in the context of home, school, and community (*Center on Families*, 1992). This study uses the Epstein definition (1997) encompassing parenting, communicating, volunteering, home learning, decision-making/advocacy, and collaboration with community.
Parent Resource Person Group (Training)/ **Parent Leadership Training Program/** **Parents as Liaisons to Schools**	An eight-week program that trains parents to be active participants and advocates in their children's education and to share these skills as community liaisons (Joseph, 1998).
Spanish-speaking	All surveyed parents were fluent in Spanish, and the survey and interviews were conducted and answered in Spanish. Although the census department uses the descriptor Hispanic, the term "Spanish-speaking" emphasizes the language issues that are at the core of this study.

Appendix B

Subjects

Sample: Criteria for Inclusion	
Parents of ESOL Students in MCPS Fluent Spanish-speaking. A random sample taken from the ESOL student registration yielded the Control Group. The entire population of workshop participants was sent surveys. Only parents of Spanish-speaking students, and As far as possible, schools with similar demographic composition.	
Experimental (participant) Group	**Control Group (non-participant)**
Participated in the Parent Resource Group. Received training in parental involvement strategies. Received the survey in Spanish.	Did not receive training in parental involvement strategies. Represented schools without ESOL parent training and/or lacking an aggressive, in-house program of parental involvement. Received the survey in Spanish.
Surveys sent: 119. Surveys (33.9%) returned: 47.	Surveys sent: 200. Surveys (42.0%) returned: 84.
Interview of 4 parents whose survey score was coded high or low for both attitude and activity. A native Spanish speaker trained by the researcher conducted the interviews.	Interview of 4 parents whose survey score was coded high or low for both attitude and activity. A native Spanish speaker trained by the researcher conducted the interviews.

Appendix C

Interview Instrument

	Interview Summary Form (Both Groups)
	Date (Start Time/End Time) Which of the following best describes the respondent's attitude? (Very antagonistic/Somewhat antagonistic/Neutral/Somewhat helpful/Very helpful) How would you describe the respondent's interest in the interview? (Very uninterested/Somewhat uninterested/Neutral/Somewhat Interested/Very interested) Did the respondent ask any questions about the survey? (Specify/Comments)

	Questions for Workshop Participants (Experimental Group)	Interview Questions 1–3 for Control Group (Non-Participant)
1	How did you learn about the workshop? Why did you take the workshop? What did you learn from the workshop? How do you think the workshop could be improved?	How do you feel about your child's school? Which of the following are you? (Very Satisfied/Satisfied/Dissatisfied) (Explain/ expand)
2	How do you feel about your child's school? Which of the following are you? (Very Satisfied/Satisfied/Dissatisfied) Why? Did your attitude change as a result of the workshop? (Explain/expand)	How has anything other than your direct contact with the school influenced your opinion? Did you hear anything from neighbor, friend, media?
3	How would you describe your participation in your child's education? (At Home/With the School) Has your participation increased after the workshop? (Explain)	How would you describe your participation in your child's education? (At Home/At School) (Explain)

	Questions for Participant (Experimental) & Non-Participant (Control) Groups
4	If you had to call your child's school, who would you call? (Probes*: Teacher? Principal? Counselor?) Have you ever had to call your child's school? If yes, why? What about?
5	Has your child's school staff ever called you? (YES/NO**) If yes, who at school? Teacher? Principal? Why? (Probes*: Was it good news? Was there a problem?)
6	Do you feel comfortable using English to communicate with school staff? (YES**) Do you write to the teacher? In English? In Spanish? (NO**) Does your child's school offer a Spanish interpreter? (Probes*: Do you use Spanish language support? Do you request it? Is it readily available? If no, do you feel that your difficulty in speaking or writing in English prevents you from (1) helping your child do homework? (2) writing notes to school (teacher)? (3) calling school (teacher)?) (Explain)

7	Do you ever go to your child's school? If yes, what activities have you attended there? (Probes*: PTA? Visit to the classroom? Special events (plays)? Report card conference? Class observation? What are the problems related to your child?) Is it a welcoming or hostile environment? (Probes*: At the front office, does the secretary smile. Is there a Spanish speaker available to interpret? Is the school staff responsive? Is there a parent center room?) When could you go to school? (Probes*: Does it conflict with your work?)
8	Do you (have the time to) read to your child? If yes, when? Do you read in Spanish? Why? Do you read in English? How often do you read to your child? Where do you get the books? (Probes*: Library? Do you buy them?) What kind of books? Children's books, comics, magazines? (Probe*: Do you know that some libraries have books in Spanish?)
9	Do you have activities that you do at home to help your child with school? Do you watch TV with your child? (Probe*: Do you and your child talk about the program?) Do you take your child to special places or events? What kind of events? Where? (Probe*: Library, plays, community activities, church?)
10	Did you enjoy your school experiences at school in your home county? In the U.S.? (Probe*: I am not asking about education level. I want info like, how did your parents help you with homework? Were parents encouraged to visit the school? Volunteer at school? Was teacher the absolute authority? What did you like best? What did you dislike? Cite examples. Have you lived in the U.S. very long?)
11	How do you feel that school will prepare your child for the future? Do you feel that school will prepare your child for the future? Do you feel that the school cares about your child? (Cares very much/Cares/Does not care)

Note: *Probe: A probe, or follow-up question, was employed when the first question yielded no response. In addition, after an appropriate interval, it was used in an attempt to trigger a response or clarification in cases when the subject appeared unsure of what the interviewer was asking. The probes helped control the questions in order to obtain specific information.

**YES/NO: In its original form, the questionnaire was laid out schematically, with YES or NO areas serving as a map to guide the interview process. For example, when the subject answered "yes" to a question, the interviewer then continued with questions listed under the YES column. Likewise, visual pattern provided logical sequence and semi-structured technique.

Appendix D

Interview Findings from Workshop Participants

Selected Anonymous Quotations from Participant Interviews Conducted in Spanish and Translated into English	
Why did you take the workshop?	**What did you learn from the workshop?**
Participant indicated that, as she did not go to school in the United States she did not "understand the whole process." She wanted to "know/learn more especially about student rights." She also felt that "things weren't right" and that "there were difficulties at school." "I was interested in knowing how the school system works." ■ "The workshop had to do with how to work with the parents and how to help each other and what to do to empower them." ■ Participant indicated desire to "educate ourselves in order to help our community" and "seeing how important it is . . . for parents to participate in schools."	"Learned about the process . . . and what are the steps" including practical steps such as: organization of the school, responsibilities of staff, mechanics of making appointments, accessibility of staff and open-door policy to parents. "All of this helped me to continue organizing parents and hold parents meetings." "You have to be active in school, to ask all the questions you need to, be on top of things and also that we have the opportunity to participate and give our opinions about the school." ■ Participant said that the workshop familiarized her with the available resources. It also helped dispel her reluctance to ask questions and enabled her to function in an independent and effective manner. She also learned to "approach the principal . . . with respect, to be assertive, not aggressive." Participant listed many specific strategies acquired through the workshop including: "how to reach parents, how to develop new strategies, evaluation methods and resources we have . . . how to use them." "I think that all parents can help, even if it's a role in which they encourage their children to do well in school and convey the importance of education, or take them to the library, or provide them with a place and materials to use."

How do you think that workshops can be improved?	Did your attitude change as a result of the workshop?
More workshops run at the same time	While not quite addressing the question posed, one parent indicated a dissatisfaction with specific staff; particularly those who were not sensitive, perhaps even resistant, to other cultures and also those who were unwilling to take on new initiatives.
"The course is great. I have seen a mother who, when I met her 5 or 6 years ago, wouldn't dare to even speak. When we had our annual meeting, or biannual, and this mother stood up in front of everyone and made a presentation without any fear."	
"I think by informing us and by training parents a little more, because schools here are very different. There are many parents who can't even sign their names, therefore they can't help the children, they don't know how to read or write. It would be good to have a training course for parents so they can learn more about the school system and how things work."	"They don't understand other cultures and want to continue doing what they have always done. They don't look at the circumstances of the Hispanics or other races. So many of the children drop out of school, their parents ignore them and the morale of the school was low."
"We could have more follow up and have smaller workshops for the new parents in the school, to become more involved with the school system and the Hispanic community."	"You are more knowledgeable about what you can do and what to ask about. You learn to ask at school and to participate more in the school."
Participant felt that parents who are involved in their child's school felt more positive about it and that those parents who participate in school are rewarded.	"I learned more about the system and understand why the school makes certain decisions."

How would you describe your participation in your child's education at school?	Has your participation at school increased after the workshop
Very active, PTA president. Participates in Hispanic committee at school and calls other parents to encourage attendance at meetings. Is active and volunteers. Many activities despite a new job limiting the time available.	"Yes," all around. Increased because she learned what was necessary for her to do. Prior to workshop not active, she learned to be involved in the home and school partnership.
Has participation at home increased after the workshop?	**How do you feel that school will prepare your child for the future?**
Yes. Yes, after learning new procedures she does the job more effectively. Now that she has learned how important the parental role is, her efforts will increase. Parent learned strategies that are effective for both school and home.	Told of the networking within the community "I think that by informing us and by training parents a little more, because schools here are very different." "It would be good if they had a couple of additional people to help the Hispanic population, translating, to help people understand the system better, which we definitely have to learn. Because if we have children in the school, we need to understand both them and the schools—they are two completely different things."
Would you like to add anything?	
"Personally, there are so many Latinos here in the schools—and we are not equitably represented. There are times when we are given opportunities and other times when there is favoritism. When there is favoritism, it makes you wonder why that is. When someone sees that I am working and working, and I don't get the same attention as another mother, I don't believe in racism or anything like that, but there is discrimination. Perhaps it is due to stereotyping." "I am quite happy. I am glad that there is follow up. We must be united and make sure that the Hispanic families are better integrated into their schools activities."	

Acknowledgments