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Running Head: FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

Building Partnerships with Families through Community Literacy Events

Najma Cheema

Western Oregon University

July, 2022



WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED

- Thesis
- Professional Project

Titled:

Building Partnerships with Families through Community Literacy Events

Graduate Student: Najma Cheema

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Science in Education

and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment of the requirements of this master's degree.

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ABSTRACT

Building Partnerships with Families through Community Literacy Events

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Master of Science: Education

MSED: Reading

Western Oregon University

July, 2022

This professional project describes the development of family literacy nights for our school. My life experience has motivated me to help our ELL students and families. As an ELL student myself I struggled with literacy since I didn't have access to resources to help me. With my own experience and working as an ELD teacher for one year and assessing our schools needs I quickly realized that there wasn't enough family engagement or involvement. Our ELL students are some of the most underserved students with low reading scores. Using my experience and research I was able to plan for eight family literacy nights. My goal is to support students with literacy by engaging our families with our school.

CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This year is my first year teaching English language development (ELD) for my whole k-5 school. This means I only work with English language learning (ELL) families. Previously, I taught in regular education first grade and second grade classrooms for five years. A big challenge I'm facing this year is parent involvement from my ELL families. Our ELL families want to be involved in their child's education but don't know how. I want to help them learn how they can be involved in their child's education in a way that embraces their culture.

According to our district assessment data our ELL students have some of the lowest scores on multiple different assessments. Currently the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning have contributed to a big learning opportunity gap more than ever before. Our ELL families already struggled with assisting their children with homework at home but during the pandemic, families were struggling even more. Parents were challenged to help their children at home with online schooling which they never had training in before, and many were front-line or minimum-wage workers who either weren't permitted to take time off work or could afford to do so. Distance learning affected 98.6% of learners worldwide (Pokhrel & Chetri, 2021). Also according to McLean and Clymer (2021), low-income families who speak languages other than English were affected the most. Some didn't have proper internet connection and parents felt a huge responsibility to become "teachers" for their children. This caused a huge burden on parents and caregivers, especially those who didn't know how to "teach" their children. This caused the "COVID-19 slide" which is similar to the "summer slide" (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020). It means that students lost reading skills during the time they were away from school.

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From my observations, my current district (Silver Falls, Oregon) lacks knowledge about the diverse families we serve and there aren't very many resources in place for them in schools. I want to advocate for our ELL students and community. We need to build relationships with our Latinx and Russian students and families that encompass both unmet needs as well as assets that families can contribute to school culture. This means creating events to build stronger and trusting relationships with them – for example, events like, family breakfasts, open invitations to school events that might incorporate a community meal and provide childcare, as well as an introductory interview that seeks feedback on how best the school can support them (Khalifa, 2018).

I want to create family literacy nights once a month. These events will be like PD's for parents that will include information about literacy and how parents can support their children at home. These monthly live meetings will build a connection between families and our school. My hope is that, in the future, this will create greater involvement among families because they will already have a connection with the school. For example, we can have "potlucks" or other community events where parents can sell food to fundraise money for the school. Parents can raise money for their child's sports teams or other clubs. For all of this to happen families will need space and physical belonging in the school. "School staff should work with the community to craft goals of expanding parental social events within the community to craft goals of expanding parental social capital within their own local contexts" (Khalifa, 2018). In the future, I plan on giving them space and encouraging them to create involvement in their child's education.

Statement

My intention is to create a curriculum for family literacy nights that will teach families how they can support their children with literacy at home. There will be a total of eight planned

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nights; one for each month (October-May). These PDs will include a presentation with hands-on practices and a summery pamphlet that will go home with parents as well as opportunities for families to share culturally over meals, discussions, etc.

Purpose

These literacy nights will help our ELL families understand literacy strategies so they can encourage their children at home to become successful in literacy. Parents and caregivers will take their learning from these family literacy nights and apply them at home. My Professional Project will allow me to plan monthly family literacy nights at school. These events and resources will be translated by our school district translators with the goal of supporting family involvement and involvement in the future. I am motivated to do this to create more opportunities for my underserved students. I believe changing student lives starts by connecting with their significant adults first.

Significance

The purpose of this project is to help families understand literacy and ways that they can support their children at home. This will help fill some gaps in our children's literacy.

Project Design

The creation of these eight PD's will include plans, slideshows, videos, visuals and take-home pamphlets. Each PD will be focused on a different topic related to literacy. For example, phonics (long vowels, short vowels, digraphs, contractions), vocabulary and many comprehension skills. The slideshows will be easy to read and include lots of practice for parents to apply the strategies. Throughout the PDs I will be modeling the strategies so families get a chance to practice with their children. Before they leave each PD, families will get a pamphlet that goes over their learning for that meeting. The pamphlet will be written in family-friendly

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language, supported by visuals, and will include new information they learned and how they can apply that at home.

Final Project

The final project will include a curriculum for our family literacy nights. This curriculum will have eight different nights planned out with what the teacher and parents will do. Each night will also have its own slideshow with videos, visuals and hand-on practices. Along with that there will be eight pamphlets that parents will be able to take home for each topic. Topics will include vowels, digraphs, contractions, rhyming words, predictions, before, during, and after reading strategies, vocabulary, and how they incorporate literacy into their daily activities.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the review is to look at the importance of family literacy involvement. This review will have past research related to family literacy and the importance of family involvement in literacy. This research is presented under the following headings: defining family literacy, importance of reading, family involvement, and literacy events.

Defining Family Literacy

It is crucial to understand what family literacy means before planning for one. ILA standard 1 shows literacy professionals are responsible for fundamental knowledge. That is “knowledge of major concepts, theories, and evidence-based foundations of effective professional learning, adult learning theory, school change, community– school partnerships, coaching, and leadership” (ILA, 2018, p. 5).

There are many different ways we can explain family literacy but they all sum up to the same meaning. First, “family literacy,” was coined by Denny Taylor (1993) to describe how literacy was used in families. According to the Florida Reading Accreditation (2014), family literacy is defined as, “the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home, at work, at school and in their community life” (p.2). A group of teachers explained family literacy as, “the involvement of the family in a child’s efforts to grasp reading” (Kuo, 2016). It’s when parents and children work together to learn, read and communicate.

Family literacy is defined as two or more people who share a common lineage, share common goals and values, have commitments to one another and reside, usually, in the same dwelling (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). These family members can be parents, grandparents, caregivers, siblings, and extended family. According to a study, Heath (1986) believes the outcome of our literacy skills depend on our home life before starting school. They depend on how literacy was

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used at home and around us. During literacy events all family members will have a chance to become literate, increase literacy and use the power of literacy and family communication to change their lives and to meet their goals (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). Not only that but it improves literacy, language and life skills for everyone.

Kuo (2016) uses the five pillars of family and community engagement to show multiple dimensions of family literacy. These pillars are, “early literacy, family involvement, access to books, expanded learning, and mentoring partnerships” (Kuo, 2016). Kuo’s (2016) article is beneficial to help preservice teachers learn more about what family literacy looks like and how they can involve and support families. Also, family literacy involves factors beyond what children are doing at home with parents. In addition to this, teachers should be educated on how cultural and social situations impact a child’s literacy development so they can serve them better (Kuo, 2016). Our families are very diverse and have different values and it is important to understand their needs for literacy.

To understand culture and family histories schools need to make efforts to build good school-family partnerships (Epstein, 2011). These efforts involve creating a sense of belonging, recognising the value of all members and their input, having focused goals, and being aware of barriers to family involvement, including both school and social factors (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Warger, Eavy, & Associates, 2009). Educators need to view families as an individual entity which possesses its own identity (Kuo, 2016). Family literacy includes families and schools to make literacy a lifelong skill for children.

Importance of Reading

Understanding the importance of reading is also addressed in ILA Standard 1, Foundational Knowledge. Literacy professionals must demonstrate, “knowledge of the major

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theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based components of reading...and its relationship with other aspects of literacy” (ILA, 2018, p. 1). In order to make literacy night important teachers and parents need to understand why reading is so important.

Learning to read is one of the most important skills in education. Being able to read opens up new opportunities. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2006), pointed out that about 25% of all high school students read at “below basic’ levels and due to low literacy levels it prevents students from mastering content in other subjects. We need children to enjoy reading so that they can be successful in all subject areas.

At a young age our families help us construct meaning about life, culture, language, learning, and literacy (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). According to the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL, 1994; 2007), every 40 seconds a child is born into poverty and every 37 seconds a child is born to a mother who did not graduate from high school and by age four, children who live in poor families will have heard 32 million fewer words than children living in professional families. This is why we need to educate all families about the importance of reading so they can incorporate it at home.

Importance of Family Involvement

ILA standard 4 addresses Diversity and Equity. The standard focuses on ways to “demonstrate an understanding of themselves and others as cultural beings; create classrooms and schools that are inclusive and affirming” (ILA, 2018, p. 3). Along with that, literacy professionals also focus on, “implementing diverse learning experiences that are culturally responsive and link school, home, and community literacy knowledge” (ILA, 2018, p. 6).

According to the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL, 1994; 2007), parental literacy is one of the single most important indicators of a child’s success. In addition to that,

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children whose parents participate in literacy programs have improved grades, test scores, reading skills, and are less likely to drop out of school (NCFL, 2007). That is why it is so crucial for parents to be involved in their children's education. Parent involvement in their child's education influences their child to have better attendance, self-concept, motivation, and behavior (NCFL, 2007). With parent involvement, children can begin a lifelong relationship with the printed word, so they grow into adults who read easily and frequently whether for business, knowledge, or pleasure (Cullinan & Bagert, 2013). Children whose families are involved in literacy programs do better in school and outside of school.

Barriers to family involvement. Families have their own personal barriers when it comes to involvement. The biggest barriers for parents are lack of education and poverty (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). According to the Oregon Department of Education we have 560,907 students and 53% are economically disadvantaged in Oregon and 18% are ELLs. In Detroit parents who received their education outside of the U.S. only completed the 6th grade (Levesque, 2017). One in five, or 20%, of American children five years old and under live in poverty (NCFL, 2007). Those are critical years in a child's life when they should be exposed to literacy and strong language skills. Some families work late jobs and don't have enough time to be involved in their children's schools. For most of our ELL families language is a huge barrier. The inability to communicate with teachers keeps parents away from school (Levesque, 2017). There is also a difference in cultural norms regarding what parent and teacher roles are. For example, in Finland teachers are given a lot of freedom, and are trusted to run their own classrooms. Parents trust teachers to hold their students at high standards and teach them everything they need (Torres, 2022). In India teachers are like "god" for many parents. They hand over their children to teachers with trust to teach them everything they need to know.

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Another barrier for families is the use of technology. At the beginning of 2020 almost all learners were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents, students and teachers were expected to use technology. According to Dhawan (2020), “COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the way for introducing digital learning.” Although this is true, it also caused a lot of frustration for many ELL families. Distance learning wasn’t successful for everyone. “Different subjects and age groups require different approaches to online learning” (Doucet et al., 2020). Most of our ELL families didn’t have access to technology, internet or training on how to use technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an especially heavy toll on Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous communities (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, Dec. 2020). This caused a lot of our students to fall behind even more than before.

Supporting Families. There are many ways to support our families. In order to involve our families they need to make them feel welcomed and wanted in our schools (Flood, Lapp, Tinajero, & Nagel, 1995). Many parents feel that they do not have the skills needed to help their children with school related matters (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). I believe that our schools can create a space for families to make them feel confident, comfortable and supported with literacy. We need to become acculturated. Children, parents, and families need to feel secure in the worlds of native heritage and English mainstreamed American education (Igoa, 1995). We want families to embrace their own culture while adapting to new cultures.

Some say that poor and minority students are mostly likely to be placed at low levels of the school’s sorting system (Ladson-Billings & William, 1995). Which means that these students continue to be served poorly by the school system. Over time the academic opportunity gap of African American and Latino students failed to improve while their suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates continued to rise (Ladson-Billings & William, 1995). “Decision making in schools

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should be guided by children's needs and with regard to their well-being" (Mangin, 2019). Creating family literacy will encourage our families to design better environments for their children at home.

A lot of the time schools are not measured on how clean or safe the neighborhoods are, what impact they actually leave on the school, and how involved families are in their children's education (Khalifa, Dunbar, & Douglas, 2013). Instead they are focused on how students do on standardized high-stakes tests. As educators and ELD specialists it's our responsibility to advocate for our students and families to keep them safe and provide them with the right resources. We need to understand families, community, and students and find ways to bring families together for home-to-school partnerships. Family literacy can create success for parents, students and teachers.

Literacy Events

Creating family events is addressed in ILA standard 6, Professional Learning and Leadership. Under this standard, literacy professionals "advocate on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities for effective literacy practices and policies" (ILA, 2018, p. 4). "Family literacy needs to be viewed as a central focus of any school improvement and school-wide literacy plan" (Zygouris-Coe, 2007). These programs may include, "literacy or English adult education, early childhood education, family-child interactive literacy activities, and parenting or child development" (Douglas, Hentry, & Martin, 2003).

The book, "Culturally Responsive School Leadership," by Muhammad Khalifa, discusses about roles and responsibilities that a culturally responsive leader should have or take. Khalifa's main focus is to, "demonstrate how culturally responsive school leaders engage communities in empowering and humanizing ways, and how they leverage this community engagement to

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promote school environments in which minoritized students can be successful” (p.12) “We must advocate for what is in the best interests of the community” (Khalifa, 2018, p. 106). As professional educators we should be creating space for family involvement and advocate for students and community (Khalifa, 2018). We need these programs to provide opportunities to welcome diverse families, build trust, celebrate multiple cultures, and open the door for new ways to collaborate (Douglas, Hentry, & Martin, 2003).

Design of the Investigation

I will be using the andragogical model for our literacy sessions. With andragogical model adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it (Knoles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). We want to encourage parents to want to learn so they can help their children learn. Tough (1979) believes that when adults want to learn something on their own, they will invest considerable energy in probing into the benefits they will gain from learning it.

This event is meant to be inspiring, engaging and helpful for all. Families will understand that we read for understanding rather than just reading words. We want children to read without adults overcorrecting them. A complete focus on code and pronunciation blocks children’s understanding that reading is essentially a meaning-making process (Delpit, 1997). Families will learn that we want children to focus on the message rather than focusing on pronouncing. “Access to the standard language may be necessary, but it is definitely not sufficient to produce intelligent, competent caretakers of the future” (Delpit, 1997.) There will be a variety of books for parents and students to practice reading with. Using different children’s books that are written in various cultural dialects allows families to feel belonging (Delpit, 1997). Books can create amazing conversations between family members. “Social interactive routines, such as book

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reading, are strongly supportive of language development, especially for vocabulary” (Rice, 1989). These interactions build strong relationships and strong readers.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT DESIGN

My Story/Design of the Investigation

As I am completing my Master's Degree education and finishing my reading endorsement, it is important for me to focus on literacy and family involvement in literacy for this project. This project has challenged me to be a leader in our school by advocating for my ELL students and families. I want to bring our families closer to our school and support them in literacy.

From my experience moving from India and being unable to get adequate help for literacy was challenging for me and my parents. At nine years old I did not speak any English which meant I couldn't read or write in English. My parents also did not know any English. Although, I did know how to read, write, and speak in my native languages Punjabi and Hindi. At the time I did not embrace being bilingual in both languages. My dream was to be "white" and have the life other white students portrayed. Going to school after Christmas was my worst nightmare because I had to pretend that I got presents for Christmas but in reality my parents did not know what Christmas was. This caused me to lose trust in my friends and teachers because "Santa" never came to my house. I also questioned why my classroom only had parties for American holidays and not for India holidays. During those years I felt lost, confused and had many questions but no confidence to ask them.

Being myself and embracing myself was never taught to me. I did not like having brown skin, eyes and hair. My peers or teachers didn't show the empowerment I was carrying with me knowing two languages as a young student. Instead they were so worried about my English and underestimated me. I was not held to high standards. My teachers did not have high expectations for me because most days I felt like a fly on the wall and as if I was expected to be

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white. No one took the time to understand me, try to talk to me, or work one-on-one with me. I really needed someone to believe in me and embrace who I was and where I come from.

From third grade to about seventh grade I did not know how to read or write. I think with adequate support in learning literacy in English would have been helpful for me and my family. Since I was fluent in my native language I think it could have transferred better with support. During those years I did not do any of my homework or get any academic support at home since my parents were illiterate in English. I knew that they wanted to help me with school but didn't know how to. My dad worked two jobs. One job during the day and the other during the night while my mom stayed home to take care of me and my siblings. Throughout those years I had horrible grades, low attendance, no motivation and felt like a complete failure. I really struggled with literacy and my parents felt helpless. My parents really put trust into my teachers as most Indian parents do. I wished that my parents could have supported me but it was not their fault at the same time. My low literacy levels made me very self conscious and embarrassed. I needed support academically and emotionally but there weren't enough resources presented to me.

Throughout my courses I learned a lot about equity, parent involvement and being a culturally responsive leader. As I read and researched I felt more intrigued to create something that was going to support my ELL families better understand literacy and how they can support their children at home with literacy. ILA standard 2, Curriculum and Instruction addresses that literacy professionals, “advocate for and lead efforts to engage families and communities.” (ILA, 2018, p.9). My goal is to get families involved in their child's education. This experience will bring me closer to families and allow me to learn what it takes to connect our families with our school.

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While thinking about my design for my family literacy nights, I wanted to create something that was not going to make families feel self-conscious or embarrassed for not being literate. Instead I want our family to embrace their culture and where they come from and still support their children in school. Culture needs to stay alive while learning and that is where I come in. I truly believe that parents do not need to know English in order to support their children in school. For some parents that is hard to believe but there are multiple ways to be involved even if parents are illiterate and don't speak English. These sessions are not meant for parents that can read, write and speak in English. These sessions will create opportunities for parents to learn alongside with their children. Everyone will be encouraged to read, speak and play in their native languages and in English.

Currently our school does not have a lot of family involvement. Our school also only has one literacy event a year. This event is "Read Across America." During this event our reading specialist plans a night for our families to come listen to teachers, community members and high school students read books to everyone that attends. About eight to ten classrooms have a designated book that is read by a teacher or a volunteer. The picture books are preselected by our reading specialist. The event usually lasts about an hour or so depending on how long it takes everyone to go around to all the classrooms. All families spread out to different classrooms and then rotate about every eight minutes when the buzzer goes off. Although this is an opportunity for parents to get involved, it's certainly not enough. We need more family involvement. I believe family literacy nights will bring our families closer together and increase the knowledge level of family members about things they can do at home to help nurture their readers.

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Project and Location

My family literacy nights will be held next year (2022-2023 school year), at our Title 1 elementary school in Silverton. We have about 346 students and 35 of the students are ELLs. This year 29 students are enrolled into ELD and 6 are monitor students which means they passed ELPA and are currently being monitored but not served for ELD services. Our ELL students speak Spanish and are making great progress in English but are not on grade level for reading. All students get free breakfast and lunch. This is our first year that our school is kindergarten through 5th grade. In the past our school was only third through fifth grade. Our school was split into two schools at different locations; both a couple miles away from each other. One school was kindergarten through second grade and the other one was third grade through fifth grade.

This family literacy curriculum will have eight different nights planned out with engaging activities for families. Having a month gap will allow families to practice strategies and not feel overwhelmed with too many sessions. Each session will be one to two hours long depending on the sessions and outcome. All family members are welcome to come with all of their children. I believe that these sessions will benefit all family members. “NCFL believes parenting adults of the families most impacted by school leaders’ decisions need opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise—and families need access to tools, resources, and connections to advocate for their students and families” (C. Smith, 2022, para. 5). The creation of these eight sessions will include plans, slideshows, visuals and take-home pamphlets. I chose this design because it’s easy to read and understand. Thinking back this is how I would have learned better. With no English I wished my teachers would have used these tools to help me understand many concepts in school. Our ELL families are not literate and would benefit from these resources.

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Each session will be focused on a different topic related to literacy and family activities. All sessions will be accompanied by slideshows that I will follow as we move through each session. They will help me stay organized and keep me on track with all the sessions. There will be numerous resources for families and ways they can stay involved. The slideshows will be easy to follow and include lots of practice for parents to apply new strategies. Throughout the sessions I will be modeling the strategies so families get a chance to practice with their children. The slideshows will be shared with families as they request them.

At the end of each session, families will be asked to complete an anonymous survey and take home a pamphlet that will go over the session's key points. All documents and resources will be translated into Spanish. The pamphlet will be written in family-friendly language, supported by visuals, and will include new information they learned and how they can apply that at home. Most importantly I want these sessions to create strong relationships between children and parents using literacy. I want each of these sessions to be fun and welcoming. Families will have a better understanding of how to navigate the school system.

Event Preparation

Present the project to the district. Before these sessions take place it's important to get approval from our district and principal. This project will be presented to our principal and director of teaching and learning at the district office. I will be presenting the benefits of family literacy using past research. The proposal will include the PowerPoint I will use for my final presentation for this project.

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Funding. First I will talk to my principal and see what our ELD budget looks like for the year. In addition to that I will be reaching out to our parent teacher club (PTC) to see if they are able to help with some of the purchases. We will need to buy prizes (games, books, local gift cards, family tickets to the movies) and food items (cookies, drinks, vegetable trays, and other snacks). I will also need to buy \$1 books from Scholastic. If parents request transportation then we will need to pay the bus barn for a bus and driver. For additional financial support, I will ask our local businesses for donations and/or discounts.

Staff sign up. This project will be presented to teachers on why this is important for our district and families. Share that this can be their chance to share any updates. There will be a sign up sheet for each session for two volunteers. Teachers will be encouraged to sign up for a slot(s) that works best for them.

Advertising. [Link to advertising poster \(This will also be translated into Spanish\)](#). Our school will post the advertisement poster to our ParentSquare. My ELD assistant will text a picture of the poster to all parents of children who are ELLs. Then create a pre-recorded voicemail about the event for parents to receive on their phones as a phone call. In the text and voicemail parents will be asked to text or call to RSVP and tell us if they need daycare and/or transportation. Written invitations will also be sent home with students. The sessions will be added to the school calendar.

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Information Pamphlet. There will be a pamphlet for each session. It will include new learnings from the sessions. The pamphlet will also include a section for school news and upcoming events.

Parent prizes. There will be tons of prizes for each event as well as free books for all. The books will help build home libraries. All prizes will be for the whole family to use and encourage spending time together. There will be raffle tickets for attending each event and at the end a family will get picked from the raffle.

Community Member Visit. Members from the community will be invited to speak to our families and answer any questions. For example, police officers, dentists, librarians, and ESOL professors, firefighters and anyone else that would like to attend. This will allow families to get to meet new members from the community and ask questions.

Parent survey. At the end of each session there will be a survey for how things are going and how things should go. I will be making changes in the future sessions according to the feedback from the surveys. The surveys will be available online and on paper. They will be simple and allow families to make suggestions and comments on the event.

Childcare. We will ask teacher volunteers and high school students to come help us with daycare. There will be a sign-up sheet online that will go out to all teachers and the high school. Most high schoolers in our district volunteer in our school because they need volunteer hours. This event will help rack up their hours. Our daycare will be in room 201, right next to our 202

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room where the sessions will take place. Daycare will include fun activities like art supplies, games, books, read alouds, and toys for children to play with. Younger siblings will be part of this childcare.

Transportation. Our local bus barn will be contacted to help us with transportation. They will create a route depending on who needs a ride. The bus will pick up families and bring them to school before 6pm and drive them back once the session is over. Each parent will get a scheduled time for pick-up once we figure out how many families need transportation.

Translators. For all or our ELL families, English is not their primary language. I will be asking our district's Spanish translator. She is very fluent in Spanish and helps our schools with IEP meetings, documents and makes many calls in Spanish. Her service will support our Hispanic families by translating at each event and helping with pamphlets and communication.

Technology/Online access/Communication. All families will get a chance to check out Chromebooks or iPads from our school technology department during the first session. Families will get training on how to use the technology in another session according to the family's request. We are hoping to help families get a gmail account so they can access some of the online resources I will share. Most communication will be through a text message and through calling from our ELD phone.

Family Literacy Night Activities.

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Teaching method. To teach new concepts I will be using the gradual release of responsibility method to scaffold my teaching but most of our lessons will be very interactive. The goal is to move our families towards being independent. Vygotsky believed that we learn through social interactions. We use “the more knowledgeable other” as we scaffold which in this case will be me and other teachers. For example, I will model and then have my learners practice with me. Then the learners will practice with their children or other learners during the session. Later families will apply what they learned at home and possibly take pictures and share their experiences in the following session.

Session 1: “Why is this important?”

In this first initial session families will be welcomed with a raffle ticket, and I’ll be introducing myself to each family as they check-in. After checking in we will learn the importance of literacy and family involvement. Parents will understand why they are at this session how these sessions play a huge role in their children’s literacy development. I will also present the difference between reading and understanding (comprehending). Our local librarian will be invited to help parents sign up for a free library card. The librarian will talk about the process for checking out books and returning books. Everyone will learn how to access the library and how to pick appropriate books. Towards the end of this session parents will be encouraged to check out technology if needed. After the session is over I will stay behind to teach families the basic functions of their computer and/or iPad.

Session 2: “Travel Around the World”

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I will share facts about myself and my history including my struggles in literacy as an ELL student. I will share an “artifact” that will be my graduation cap and my degree to show how important education is for me. Each family will bring an artifact or anything that represents them and/or their culture. Each family will get a few minutes to show and talk about their artifact and answer some questions. They will share where they are from and how long they’ve been living in the United States. Families will place a pin on the map to show where they are from. Our last activity will be two truths and a lie. In a circle, each family will tell us two truths and a lie. The group will vote on which fact is a lie. After everyone makes their prediction the family will tell everyone the lie. To close out the session there will be a lesson on predicting before reading and slightly go over during and after reading predicting strategies.

Session 3: “Dreaming about the future.”

In this session parents will be able to visualize their child's educational goals and how they can help achieve them. All parents will write or draw what their goals are for their children. On a separate paper parents will also write down their goals for these sessions. I will read the most common goals amongst the parents. Then we will discuss ways learning can happen at home “unknowingly.” Ways families can create conversation and collaborate. I will show pictures of the examples and explain a few of them. Remind parents that their involvement is very important in their child's development and goals. We will discuss ways parents can create learning opportunities that encourage collaboration. There will be multiple examples of ways families can create conversations for literacy-rich experiences.

Session 4: “Let’s dress up”

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Families will come dressed up as characters from their favorite book. There will be a mini lesson on how to read with expression to keep the child's attention and to make it more fun. Parents will learn how bold words sound different from words that are not bold. Also what explanation and quotation marks mean. Also show some examples for words. I will read-aloud in a circle _____ with the family to show different expressions. Then each family will get a chance to practice a scene from their book and act it out with their family.

Session 5: "Bedtime stories"

This session is meant for families to practice reading during bedtime. Everyone will come dressed in their pajamas and with books their children have picked out from the public library. Families will be encouraged to bring tents, blankets, flashlights and pillows. We will also turn big kidney tables into tents by covering them with blankets. I will have hot cider, milk and cookies for everyone. There will be mini lessons on the importance of bedtime stories and before, during, and after reading strategies.

Session 6: "Let's cook!"

In this session we will make ceviche. This will allow families to work together and make something to eat. Although most families will know how to make ceviche, we will follow a recipe that I was able to find online. Families will be notified about this session in advance in case they want to bring additional ingredients to add to their own ceviche. I will bring ingredients mentioned in the recipe I found and I will buy tortilla chips for everyone. Before making the ceviche parents will learn about the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, & why). Then we will read the recipe and answer our 5 Ws.

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Session 7: “It’s time to play!”

Everyone will learn how to play a few games and be able to take some home at the end of the session. We will play “HedBanz.” In this game each player wears a card on their headband and asks yes/or no questions to determine what the card shows. The goal is to guess what the card shows as quickly as possible. This game helps children with speech and language challenges. Not only that but it allows them to practice formulating questions and using specific vocabulary. For the second game we will use playdough. Families will have flexibility to choose what they want to play with the playdough from the options provided. This activity helps with fine motor skills and encourages creativity.

Session 8: “Wrapping it up!”

In this last session families will return all technology devices that were borrowed. There will be prizes and certificates for all the families that came to all the sessions. This session will be used to inform parents about resources in our community. We will invite local speakers to come and share what they do for us and how they support our community. There will be a librarian, dentist, doctor, ELD professor and a local Spanish translator. Families will be able to ask questions and ask for additional resources from our speakers. At the end we will have a mariachi band and food for everyone to enjoy. Hopefully at this point families feel comfortable and encouraged to dance.

Future/Additional events: Donuts with dad. Games. Muffins with mom.

Data Collection

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To collect data I will be giving out an anonymous survey after each session. The survey will be translated into Spanish and families will be able to answer some questions by choosing different face emoji visuals. In the surveys I will ask if they thought the session was beneficial to them and if they will incorporate it at home with their children. The survey will also include questions on how I can make the event even better. In addition to that I would like to get feedback on what parents would like to learn in addition to what we already have planned. Parents will get a chance to comment, question and add suggestions for our future sessions. For each session I will keep data of how many families, teachers and students attended. This will help me understand our pattern and how to plan future sessions. As we move forward over the years I want to see how these sessions improve students' reading scores and family involvement in school.

My Vision

The purpose of these sessions is to help our ELL families understand literacy strategies so they can encourage their children at home to practice literacy and become successful in school and outside of school. Parents and caregivers will take their learning from these family literacy nights and apply them at home. Families will enjoy books, games, interactions and learn fun and easy ways to share stories. Most importantly they will spend time with their children to support reading and language development. I am motivated to create these opportunities for my underserved students and learn ways to improve family involvement. I believe changing student lives starts by connecting with their significant adults first.

These adults could also be teachers and other staff members. Our teachers will get an opportunity to talk to our ELL families and create trusting relationships. Currently our teachers

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don't have very many opportunities to talk to parents because we have to request a translator in advance before meeting with a bilingual family. Teachers and parents only actually communicate during conferences and that's not enough communication. Luckily our translator will be there at every family literacy night to create communication between teachers and families. These events will create more connections between teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders. Our teachers will learn to become more culturally responsive when they learn about our families. While parents will feel comfortable to learn about teachers' expectations and grade-level benchmarks. Teachers will get an insight of their students' homelife and parents will get a chance to learn about their children's school life.

All activities will include students. That will allow our students to spend quality time with their families. Young school aged children will learn to share books, stories, and life experiences with their families. There will be a lot of reading, playing and conversations. Our families are usually busy working and don't really get much time to spend with their children. All families will get a chance to come out and enjoy time and knowledge together.

Contribution to Knowledge

As a first year ELD teacher and from my life experiences I want to learn more about how I can involve families into their child's education. I want our ELL students to have support at home with literacy. The biggest challenge we face at our school is family involvement and low scores in reading for our ELL students. Our families do not attend most school events or participate in PTC and town hall meetings. This causes our ELL families to not be part of decision making that involves their children. Instead, all decisions are being made by other families and staff members. I believe that family literacy will empower families to be part of

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these meetings and stay involved with our school community. I want families to speak up for their rights and advocate for their children in our school.

In the future, I also plan on being an administrator and I plan on advocating for our ELL students and their families. This is a long term goal of mine. Family literacy will expand my knowledge on taking important roles in our school district. It will allow me to work with other staff members as well as administrators. All of these events will advance my knowledge on ways I can involve families into literacy. I want to see if there will be improvement in family involvement, student academics and teacher knowledge on families. I hope to add to my bucket of things I can do to help my students become successful. Throughout the sessions I will recognize ways to improve my sessions and family involvement for better home-to-school partnerships.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

Appendix A

Slideshows for sessions

1. Session 1 “Why is this important?”

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1GCoQlstChoWWeZzrVVbYChPZ59-FwamsWqXkgAVOEMM/edit?usp=sharing>

2. Session 2 “Travel around the world.”

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1z_R6g7wnhPLRrf0rrE1DV5mXLKE6erM-UBJsFZtI00Q/edit?usp=sharing

3. Session 3 “Dreaming about the future.”

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wSIT6yLiNvgxgkjzOiZ7awLqbjugBXCP4SmGSmTARYo/edit?usp=sharing>

4. Session 4 “Let’s dress up!”

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1hgRl_1pO55ae87pyHEMVvA3OZ0tPeGRkkyAboxil4I/edit?usp=sharing

5. Session 5 “Bedtime stories.”

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<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10kvISLaUGx3sFK1gXPbG57omRPNieRpjA49OmwPbfnM/edit?usp=sharing>

6. Session 6 “Let’s cook!”

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1avENLwiU8SRk1PR0djrip6sWEhBdOgF30ei2qb-_dIc/edit?usp=sharing

7. Session 7 “It’s time to play!”

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1EMrj15GvTOhVRwN7iEE7z9bsLpl1Otu4HcIkWVLxqMc/edit?usp=sharing>

8. Session 8 “Wrapping it up!”

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XhpUicNFp06xK923uc8jWD9RIEH3Wq4qaIuYdvmhIM/edit?usp=sharing>

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Appendix B

Pamphlets to take home

1. Session 1

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OHXcS4E7oPKoDF88AB0_YYSkPbOxaMAahwFJluFuzGQ/edit?usp=sharing

2. Session 2

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14MXY9xKLdVQ18djbcFEIGJAtjm15N-29OoeGUHmq7a4/edit?usp=sharing>

3. Session 3

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18_T6KnGr0UBzRWMLMhz1Zz4k7s0nPIQL3_TZBTw1s6M/edit?usp=sharing

4. Session 4

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IcMQ5za4uzGF_nHHjO4wNBIDx4__xkKsklruqv4vVdk/edit?usp=sharing

5. Session 5

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SKLJtL8818kVFdqOyypxHGwh8UAcJhq0lUpM-5ushwE/edit?usp=sharing>

6. Session 6

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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZPG_N2dY3f8Mzm9LJcjCuzcVIV24Qep4apeM5a4Qxyk/edit?usp=sharing

7. Session 7

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g2h028Wc5cVBEloSIN6jDhYhz8s1C6tcW3fZe7QeR8g/edit?usp=sharing>

8. Session 8

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ya9H82jk_jxlS6ziZgozwD60DzhFGQHxiUbYDKcKGms/edit?usp=sharing

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Appendix C

- Parent sign up sheet

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aJ_HkPOjWd8djry0TME3k6UZPADuzIMKko3Y9vK281o/edit?usp=sharing

- Staff sign up sheet

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H5FZzN3MZFCqv56Mr7GhXoRIft3gJ6RTajiEorAhno/edit?usp=sharing>

- Exit tickets

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h06Cv7sHbYDYjqjkS5Fs21ASYqGoAvcgf0eU1_CeLzo/edit?usp=sharing

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CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTION

Throughout this project I learned that family involvement is an important predictor of children's academic success and social relationships (Kuo, 2016). When children know their parents care about their school lives and provide them with needed assistance, they tend to work harder in school, possess more positive personality traits, and have better relationships with their peers (Bogenschneider & Johnson, 2004; Bouffard & Stephen, 2007; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Family involvement with literacy opens many doors for students. According to Michael Graves (2006), students' vocabulary increases when they are exposed to new words through various language experiences, such as reading aloud, independent reading, and oral discussions. Students will have access to language through literacy. With creating family literacy nights my hope is to promote more family involvement in our school community. I want to create success for parents, teachers and most importantly for our students.

Before I decided to do this project I thought that I had to teach parents how to teach their children to read but family literacy is a lot more than that. Instead it's a way to connect parents to their children and school. It's all about using new learning to create a fun and engaging curriculum for our families. My biggest worry was that no one else was going to advocate for family literacy nights but after talking to some of my co-workers they were very supportive and agreed to support me in any way. With teacher/staff involvement we can create stronger relationships with our school and community. My hopes are that staff members will become more culturally responsive and build trusting relationships with our families through these literacy nights.

Currently our school does a nice job supporting students inside the classroom but needs additional support for students outside of the classroom. We need parents to know what their children are learning and how they can incorporate their learning at home. Family literacy nights

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will help parents get creative at home. In addition to literacy nights I realized that our school needs to start communicating with parents by sending home translated information and keeping in touch with them through texting or other platforms. This year there have been many times our schools sent home important information without translating. Our non-English speakers had no idea what was coming home. At COSA I learned that we are required to send home all important documents or information in their family's native language. Currently our school and teachers forget to get certain pamphlets or documents translated. Next year I will be advocating for our school to do a better job translating anything that goes home.

Every year our school district sends our English language development (ELD) teachers and a few administrators to COSA (Coalition of Oregon School Administrators) conferences. I am hoping to go to COSA next year since I will be teaching ELD again. This conference taught me to be more culturally responsive and taught me a few things about the law. All of this information is equally important for all staff members. After my COSA conference next year, my goal is to work with my ELD team and take what we learned and create a PD for our teachers and other staff members. We would like to create a PowerPoint or some sort of training (PD). These PD's will give teachers a better understanding of how to serve our ELL students and families better.

These events will help grow my knowledge as an ELD teacher on how to build family relationships and create involvement in school. I am motivated to continue altering and making family literacy nights better in the future. Next family literacy night will teach me what worked and what needs to be tailored. I will continue to look for opportunities to support families and staff members on how to make our school more welcoming and successful.

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