

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Hass	Gina	M	
(Writer) (Last Name)	(First Name)	(Middle Initial)	
Comparison of parenting attitudes and behaviors before and after exposure to the family literacy program for parents with limited English in the St. Paul, Minnesota School District			
(Title)			
Home Economics	Karen Zimmerman	August, 2004	68
(Graduate Program)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(# of Pages)
American Psychological Association, 5 th edition			
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)			

As Minnesota faces the largest budget deficit in the State's history, every program receiving state monies must document and present evidence to show that the program is invaluable and worth continuing. In response to the budget crisis, the researcher developed a parent survey to focus on the parenting attitudes and behaviors of Family Literacy participants. Pre- and post test information was utilized to compare Family Literacy participant's parenting attitude and behaviors. The researcher collected data by distributing pre surveys to 54 parents enrolled in three Family Literacy sites in St. Paul School District in October, 2003. Of the 54 participants in fall, who took the post test survey in February, which yields a return rate of 56%.

Parent education made a difference in four behaviors of the Family Literacy participants. The parenting behaviors increased in the following areas: pointing out things in a book to their children, deciding how much television their child watches, telling their children how they feel, and having their children sit on their lap when they read to them.

The information collected through this survey was very useful in assisting parent educators in targeting areas of importance for parents in their classes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the many people who assisted me in the successful completion of my graduate studies and thesis.

A heart felt thank you is extended to the following people: Dr. Karen Zimmerman, my research advisor, for assisting me with my many questions and proofreading; my mom, Dorothy, for her willingness to baby sit and help out in every way possible; to my husband Matt for his support and encouragement; to my daughter Hannah for giving me the will to continue and the lessons in persistency; to Mary Dooley-Burns, Ann Lovrien and the rest of the St. Paul Public School staff who supported my research. All of you made my success possible and I thank each of you for contributing in all of the many ways. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi
Table of Tables	ix
Chapter 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Research Questions	3
Definition of Terms	4
Assumptions	4
Limitations	4
Chapter 2	
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Introduction	6
Description of ECFE	6
Description of Family Literacy	8
Working with Immigrant Parents	10
Parenting in the Asian/ Hmong Culture	12
Parenting in the Somali Culture	16
Parenting in the Latino Culture	18
Summary	20
Chapter 3	
METHODOLOGY	22

Introduction	22
Description of Subjects	22
Sample Selection	22
Instrumentation	23
Data Collection	24
Data Analysis	24
Limitations	25
Chapter 4	
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	26
Introduction	26
Demographic Information	26
Item Analysis	33
Hypothesis One	43
Hypothesis Two	43
Hypothesis Three	44
Discussion	44
Chapter 5	
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	48
Introduction	48
Summary	48
Conclusions	50
References	53
Appendix A	56
Letter to Parent Educators (Pretest)	57

Letter to Parent Educators (Post-test)	58
Appendix B	59
Research Survey	60

TABLE OF TABLES

Demographic Information

Table 1 – Age	27
Table 2 – Marital Status	27
Table 3 – Education	28
Table 4 – Employment Status	29
Table 5 – Income	29
Table 6 – Race	30
Table 7 – First Language	30
Table 8 – Languages	31
Table 9 - Length of Family Literacy involvement	32
Table 10 - Gender	32

Item Analysis

Table 11 - Pretest Attitude Comparison of Completers and Non-Completers	34
Table 12 - Pretest Behaviors Comparison of Completers and Non-Completers	36
Table 13 - Posttest Attitudes	39
Table 14 - Posttest Behaviors	40
Table 15 - Behavior Items Paired Sample	41
Table 16 - Attitude Items Paired Sample	42

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Parenting isn’t the only influence of a child’s development, but it’s the one we can do the most about” (Popkin, n.d.n.p.). The Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program focuses on reaching and educating parents of young children by influencing the way in which they will parent their children.

Family Literacy classes focus on three things: reading, writing, and communicating English. It is offered through different programs and agencies.

Family Literacy has collaborated with ECFE in St. Paul. One day of class time is dedicated to learning parenting skills. Family Literacy classes, in collaboration with ECFE programs in the St. Paul, MN. Public School district, offer parents who are learning the English language a chance to develop their parenting and communication skills. Participants come to classes, with their children, two to three times per week. They must have children between the ages of birth to five years old.

Parenting classes are not limited to ECFE in Minnesota. There are many different types of parenting classes that are offered through many different agencies. Some parents have been mandated to attend parenting classes, while a vast majority of parents have elected to take such classes. Family Literacy classes, specifically, are offered in a variety of settings. St. Paul Family Literacy classes, in collaboration with ECFE, focus strictly on parenting and learning English. Other Family Literacy classes focus on earning a general education degree (GED) or adult basic education (ABE).

When parents migrate to a new country, there are certain expectations placed upon them. Each culture has a certain expectation when it comes to parenting, but immigrants are forced to learn the standards for parenting in their new country. Parenting

classes are an excellent way for immigrants to become comfortable with a new language, culture, and set of standards for parenting. St. Paul School District has a large Latino and Hmong population. These cultures make up a majority of the Family Literacy participants. Reese and Gallimore (2000) found that Hispanic parents considered reading something that is learned, through repeated practice after school begins. In American culture, society recognizes that pre-reading skills are learned and practiced even before school begins. In the Hmong culture, corporal punishment has been a traditional part of Hmong child rearing practices, which is generally frowned upon in American culture (Hughes, 1993).

Each Family Literacy participant brings with them their own ideas and cultural traditions when it comes to parenting. The parenting portion of Family Literacy is focused on the United States style of parenting. Each parent educator is sensitive to the understanding of various cultures, but uses an American parenting framework for their lessons in parent education. There is no set curriculum for teaching parent education in Family Literacy, but each educator draws from various resources and curricula in order to teach these parents. The areas of focus are child development (physical, social/emotional, language, speech and cognitive), violence prevention and basic American parenting skills.

There have been several studies (Briener & Forehand, 1981; Gard & Berry, 1986; Graziano & Diament, 1992) conducted that indicate benefits of parent education programs such as ECFE and Family Literacy. Over and over again, parent training programs have proven an effective strategy for reducing violence at home and improving children's behavior (Gard & Berry, 1986; Graziano & Diament, 1992). Parenting classes allow parents to connect with their children's school and learn how to help their children

become socially competent and independent adults. Epstein (1987) and Henderson (1988) found that the more involved parents are, the better their perception of teachers and schools, and the more successful their children are both socially and academically. The younger the child, the more effective the parent training is likely to be (Patterson, DeBaryshe & Ramsey, 1989). A study conducted by the National Center for Family Literacy (1997) indicated that parents who attend Family Literacy classes, make significant improvements in their self-confidence, confidence in parenting, and they are engaged in schools and their child's education to a degree that far surpasses their level of involvement before enrolling in Family Literacy.

This study is unique in that it measures attitudes and behaviors of parents involved with Family Literacy. Because ECFE in the St. Paul Public School District has collaborated with Family Literacy the parenting component has been added to the curriculum. Since the parenting component is unique to Family Literacy within ECFE, compared with other places Family Literacy is offered, this study is being conducted to develop baseline data.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to document whether change in attitude and behavior occurs between pre and post testing of parents enrolled in family literacy classes in St. Paul, MN. ECFE classes. Data will be collected through pre surveys collected in class in October of 2003 and post surveys collected in February 2004.

Research Questions

There are three research questions this study will attempt to answer. They are;

1. Did parents change their parenting attitudes after

- attending parenting classes?
2. Was there a change in parent behaviors after attending parenting classes?
 3. Was there a difference between the pretest scores of those who completed the parenting program and those who did not complete the program?

Definition of Terms

There are four terms that need to be defined for clarity of understanding. These are:

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)- This Minnesota state wide funded program is offered to families with children birth to age five. The class time consists of parent-child interaction time and parent education.

Family Literacy- Classes offered by St. Paul Public Schools Early Childhood Family Education program for parents and children with limited English speaking skills. Classes meet 2 to 3 times per week. One of those days, parents meet with a parent educator and the other days they meet with an English Language teacher. Each day, parents do activities focused on language and literacy with their children age birth to five years old.

Completers- These are the participants in the study that completed pre-test and post-test surveys.

Non-completers- These are the participants in the study that completed only the pre-test survey and not the post-test.

Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed that all subjects will attend class regularly and speak and understand some English and answer survey questions honestly. Limitations to this study are that

there are different teachers at different sites, parents have varied years of participation in the program, varied ages of children and varied levels of English. Some subjects may drop or have irregular attendance. Some participants at certain sites meet two days per week and participants at other sites meet three times per week. Participants may be attending with their grandchildren. The survey will be translated into Spanish only.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion about Early Childhood Family Education and family literacy followed by an explanation about working with immigrant parents. The chapter will also include a discussion about culture and parenting in the three major parent populations represented, Hmong, Spanish and Somali. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Description of Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

In 1974 the Minnesota Legislature began appropriating money into educating children birth to age five. The state was ahead of its time with making the connection between early education and performance in school later in life. Two hundred and thirty thousand dollars was allocated to pilot six local programs. Today, the program is available statewide and serves over 310,000 parents and children annually. It is the largest and oldest program of its kind in the nation.

The mission of ECFE is to strengthen families and enhance the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children (Kurz-Riemer, 2001). There are no income requirements or special need restrictions. All parents need information and support to raise healthy children. ECFE also works closely with community agencies and programs to connect family to resources that they may need.

Many school districts throughout Minnesota offer an ECFE program. Licensed parent educators and early childhood teachers offer the program in school buildings, homes, shopping centers, public libraries, health clinics, apartment buildings, homeless

shelters, faith facilities, and other community sites. Each program is unique and builds the program around the needs of the community members. Typically, the children and their parents participate in class for two hours per week throughout the school year. Some school districts provide summer programming as well. ECFE is a voluntary program available for a nominal cost on a sliding fee basis, with fees reduced or waived for those unable to pay.

Each ECFE program typically includes three central components for children and parents. Parent and Family Education offers adults opportunities to share their parenting joys and concerns. Early Childhood Education allows the children age birth to five to play and learn by participating in developmentally appropriate planned activities. Finally, parent-child interaction allows parents to observe their children interacting with other children, observe other families with similar age children, and participate with their children in enjoyable learning experiences.

ECFE programs focus on the parent child interaction because research shows that early childhood programs involving both parents and children are more effective than programs focusing exclusively on children. Research also confirms that children whose parents are involved from early on in their education and learning are more successful in school. With high divorce rates, remarriages, economic pressures, poverty increases and the general complexity of modern life, there is intense stress on families of all income levels. ECFE acts as a family and friend during their parenting years. Parents come to rely on the support from the ECFE program and from the other parents in the program.

Description of Family Literacy

The Family Literacy program in the St. Paul Public School District has four components: adult education, children's education, parent and child together time (PACT) and parent time. There are goals for each of these components.

The adult education component is used to extend basic education skills. It teaches adults to think more critically, solve problems, set and achieve goals, and acquire interpersonal skills. The instructional methods combine more individualized study with active learning. The goal is to take classroom methods of instruction and include teaching skills within the family context. The adult education component expects to affect significantly the future of the children who attend the program. This is accomplished by including personal and family problem-solving in the curriculum along with an understanding of the parent support role in the development and learning of children (National Center for Family Literacy, 1997). Skills that parents develop in class are parallel with those needed to function successfully in the workplace. Some of those include: time management, effective communication, team work, ability to self-assess, and to establish and use systems. The parents meet with an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher for two days during parent time. On the other day, the parents meet with a parent educator. The ELL teacher help to develop the skills listed above.

The second component of family literacy is the children's education. This component is designed to promote and foster the growth and development of young children and to involve parents in their children's educational program to be maintained throughout the children's educational career. The children's curriculum focuses on the whole child with an emphasis on literacy development. Children are given support and

guidance from teachers and parents and are provided opportunities to make decisions, problem-solve, and develop self-confidence. Materials in the classroom are age and culturally appropriate. Parents are involved in meaningful activities throughout the day in the children's classroom. Teachers encourage parents to help assess and discuss their children's progress through observation.

Parent and child together time (PACT) is the third component of literacy. PACT provides parents and children time to learn and interact together as a family unit. Children lead the parents by expressing interest in certain activities. Staff members help parents learn how to support their children's literacy learning through these interactions. This time also offers parents and children a time to develop a partnership in their education. At the end of the PACT component, the teacher offers a large group activity for parents and children. The group activity is literacy focused, which provides ideas for transferring the learning to the home. Direct effects of the Parent and Child Together Time includes an increase in: time parents spend reading to children, positive parent guidance, adults and children engaging in other forms of learning, parents' confidence as they interact with their children and perceptions of the parents' value of education (Mikulecky, Lloyd & Brannon, 1994).

The fourth and final family literacy component is parent time. This component offers parents instruction on how their children grow and develop and build literacy skills. It also allows parents time to address critical issues related to family well-being and success. This helps connect parents with a wide range of community resources and opportunities to network and develop mutual support systems with others in the program. This program goal is achieved not only through traditional classroom instruction, but also by observing the early childhood teacher in the classroom. As parents strengthen their

skills, confidence develops and expectations for themselves and their children change. In parent time, participants make connections with other parents in the group and it offers them the opportunity to both give and receive support. Family literacy helps parents remove barriers, which may be seen as insurmountable when it comes to being successful as parents and employees. The parent educator is able to offer encouragement to parents so they stay in the program and succeed. Participants in Family Literacy meet with the parent educator one time per week. The other two days, the parents meet with the ELL teacher.

A Family Literacy Tutorial Project in southern California had a dropout rate of 70% after the first year. Books chosen with text-based questions, which called for predictions and higher order thinking skills, were confusing and troublesome for the parents. The parent participants viewed the questions as joyless tasks to be completed. This resulted in the high dropout rate of 70%. In an effort to remedy the high dropout rate, a more culturally sensitive approach was used the second year. This time the parent participants helped to create their own storybooks, which were often fact based on their own cultural history and related to the children and their families. As a result, the dropout rate dramatically fell to 0%. The parents read with noticeable improvement in style of pride of authorship, and obvious enjoyment of the experience (Janes & Kermani, 2001). Through this example it is obvious to see that when educators are more sensitive to the learners abilities, needs and culture, the response and outcome is more positive.

Working with Immigrant Families

Rose (1983) wrote that acculturation is a process of education and inner transformation and enhancement of the individual. Acculturation is vital because this

transformation is necessary to the material and psychological well-being of the person trying to make a new life as a stranger in a strange land. During this process the refugee must learn that the old ways of doing things may have a very different meaning in the new culture. It is learning to understand cultural information that is heard and seen and to in turn communicate in new cultural terms.

When families come to the United States from other countries, it is important to establish a working relationship in an interactive process that includes helping families make multiple connections and open communication avenues. Proactive service provisions include cultural bridging, brokering for services, and system wide advocacy (Russell & White, 2001). It is important to be very sensitive to other cultures when teaching parenting skills. Hughes (1993) suggested that program personnel educate themselves about minority cultures' concepts of parenthood and the family and not pressure parents to modify their parenting behavior and attitudes. Instead she suggests offering English-as-a-Second-Language and basic skills instruction to help these families transition.

The Limited English proficient (LEP) Parent Involvement Project is a collaborative project between two state agencies which helps refugee and immigrant parents to be effective in American culture. That project has set four goals to help develop the program. The first goal is to build on what people already know from their own experience as parents in their own countries. Since parents have a rich knowledge of what it is like to parent in their own country, it is important to find a common ground upon which to build. The second goal is to help parents restore their visions of themselves as the first and primary teachers of their children. The third goal is to create opportunities for parents to build bridges between experiences in their new and native

countries. Finally, the fourth goal is to encourage parents to define and keep values and traditions that are meaningful parts of their cultures (Pecoraro & Phommasouvanh, 1991).

When a wide range of parent services and programs were offered to immigrant parents, they perceived these opportunities as important (Johnstone & Hiatt, 1997). The number one priority for new immigrant parents was English-as-a-Second-Language class. These classes were consistently well attended. In a four year pilot program for new immigrant parents, program priorities shifted from families' basic needs toward increased involvement in learning activities at home, decision-making, governance, and advocacy.

Hughes (1993) gave an example from her research about conflicts between traditional Hmong values and traditional American parenting values. Corporal punishment has been a traditional part of Hmong child rearing practice, but is generally frowned on in the United States. Some Hmong parents have been told that it is against the law to spank their children, but this does not solve their problem on how to discipline their children. The parents feel caught between two cultures. Teachers for immigrant parents must become culturally sensitive and educate themselves about minority cultures' concepts of parenthood and the family. Early childhood intervention programs, such as Family Literacy, put pressure on parents to conform to American middle class values. Educators must recognize the cultural differences and similarities in order to bridge these two concepts of parenting.

Parenting in the Asian/ Hmong Culture

Asian/ Pacific Americans represent people from a variety of countries such as China, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Guam. It is unclear as to where Hmong originated from, but from what has been researched, Hmong were slaves of the Chinese who freed

themselves by moving into the mountains of China. The slaves named themselves "Hmong" meaning "freedom". Some Hmongs eventually migrated into Laos and Thailand and intermixed into their cultures. The Hmong are considered Southeast Asian. Hmong people have only been in the United States for about two decades. They fled to the U.S. and to Australia and France in order to escape the "private war". There may be Hmongs living in other countries, but very few due to the fact that Hmongs like to hold on to the comfort of community and culture (Hmongs Today, n.d.). The St. Paul Public School district reports approximately 26% of students where Hmong is their first language (Children, Families and Learning, 2002). However, there is a much larger Hmong population within the district, but data by race is not collected by the district.

Understanding parental beliefs and traditions about parenting is important in helping Hmong parents understand how we want them to parent in the United States. In the Hmong culture there are six guiding principles and values: harmony, family, respect for elders, proper form, Confucian teachings and education (Drews, Salus & Dodge, 2003).

Harmony is a belief rooted in Confucianism in the Asian culture. They believe that maintaining harmony and good relations in the home and with others is very important. Many times, in order to prevent offending or hurting someone else's feelings, people from this culture will avoid direct confrontation, avoid saying "no," and avoid expressing anger or displeasure. Often times others misinterpret Asians as being stubborn or "beating around the bush." These guiding principles translate into verbal, social, and emotional restraint and the consistent use of politeness, tact, and gentleness in interpersonal relations (Lynch & Hanson, 1998).

Family is another value held close to people in this culture. The family and the family name are held in very high regard. Embarrassing oneself or shaming the family is unbearable. Family loyalty means that the primary loyalty is to the family. This also includes extended family. An individual is viewed as the product of all generations of the family from the beginning of time. This value is frequently used by the family and Asian societies to control deviant behavior.

Elders are highly regarded in Asian cultures. Elders are never questioned and always obeyed. They are considered right or appropriate in their judgement and behavior.

Proper form refers to the belief in tradition and the strict social practices and customs. This includes things such as how guests are received and meals are prepared and served (Lynch & Hanson, 1998).

Confucian teachings emphasize the moral aspect of education as well as the belief that the development of the human character varies according to experience. Parents thus assume the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive appropriate guidance (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). Most Asian parents value education; however, some parents do not regularly attend school-related activities. Some parents who were interviewed cited the language barrier as one reason for their lack of participation (Morrow, 1991).

In the Hmong culture, wives are expected to join the families of their husbands. Elders and males are held in high regard. All members of the household, even married sons, are expected to obey the father. Young girls are expected to learn to run the family and take over financial affairs at a very early age. The husband and the father usually are not expected to take care of the finances other than to earn the money. Women play a

strong leadership role in the family even though they are often resigned to being very submissive and passive. After a woman becomes an elder, she can begin to assert authority and even then her authority is generally restricted to female members of the family. Some of the responsibilities of the women, in financially secure households, are to care for infants, instruct young girls, household chores, care for elderly, and, as mentioned before, household finances. Sometimes the woman is expected to contribute to the work force as well as handle all of the household responsibilities.

Children are viewed as gifts from God. From infancy, mothers typically raise children. They are generally indulged and have their needs readily met. Until the age of 4 or 5, the child's behavior is accepted usually without formal disciplining. Parents tend not to extend many limits on their children. Physical punishment is acceptable for older children and psychological punishment is often used to discipline the children (Drews, Salus & Dodge, 2003). Children are taught to suppress aggressive behavior, overt expressions of negative emotions, and personal grievances; they must inhibit strong feelings and exercise self-control in order to maintain family harmony. The communication pattern between parents and children is generally one way. The parent speaks to the child and the child listens. This protective and controlling behavior of Asian parents comes from a basic distrust of outsiders. Although the belief and tradition of this culture is to promote family interdependence, parents may also be encouraging the development of individual independence in order to enable their children to function effectively in their mainstream culture (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). As families from this culture are becoming "Americanized" they are facing problems within the family. Traditional values and beliefs are being rejected by youth as they are learning new social values, attitudes and dating habits in schools. The families are attempting to deal with

the problems in a traditional manner without adequate community resources to do so. This is why having parenting sessions for parents of children who are being schooled in America is so important. Parents who have not been educated on what or why the children are being taught these things in school cannot be expected to deal with the children living in this new culture properly. Parents must be taught alternative ways of dealing with the new social behaviors children are learning. According to Fong Yun Lee (1995), many Asian parents do not know how to become actively involved in their children's school activities and many teachers do not know how to encourage and support Asian parents to become educational partners. Thao (2000) found that Hmong fathers had a more positive attitude towards their children's education than Hmong mothers did. However, Hmong mothers were more involved in helping children with their schoolwork, and participated with school meetings more than Hmong fathers.

Parenting in the Somali Culture

The Somali population is growing fast in Minnesota and St. Paul Public School district. It is estimated that there are over twenty thousand refugees from Somalia settling in St. Paul and Minneapolis (Adam, 1999). One percent of the students in St. Paul Public School district speak the Somali language. However, there are many more Somali students in the district, but the data is collected only on language spoken.

Adam (1999) stated that "the Somalis are generally very enthusiastic and resilient people, but the background of war, death and destruction that they have fled makes resettlement quite challenging. These new refugees have language, cultural, and religious concerns. As they resettle in their new environment, Somalis would like to preserve their cultural and religious values."

Somalis are nearly all Muslims and their customs are primarily Islamic in nature. The Islam religion has many rules especially regarding conduct and gender relations. Although Muslims believe that both men and women are equal before God, the male is assigned positions of highest respect by religious tradition, as well as overall responsibility for family unity and well-being (Heitritter, 1999). The women's role in the family is described as the "cornerstone" of family life and central to preserving family strength across cultures. Islam prescribes that both men and women behave and dress modestly. Men and boys are always to be covered from the navel to the knee and women are to cover everything except their face and hands. The women wear loose-fitting clothing known as hijab or khimar (Adam, 1999). Many Muslims are reluctant to shake hands with the opposite sex. This is a sign of personal modesty.

Within the family, children assume their father's surname and clan affiliation. A mother's family may be from another clan, but warm relationships exist among cousins who knew each other as children. The mother retains her maiden name and position in her clan. Family loyalty is very important and families help one another in times of need (Adam, 1999). Elders are also well respected in the community. Elders are addressed as "aunt" or "uncle" even if they are strangers (Community University Health Care Center, n.d.).

Marriages are either arranged or a result of personal choice. The common age for marriage is 14 or 15 years old. It is customary in Islamic tradition for men to have up to four wives. In urban and rural areas, a man with multiple wives provides separate homes for his different families. Whether these families interact or not depends on the preference of the individuals. It is customary for the husband to work and the wife to stay home with the children. Having large families is very common. Seven children is

average. Childbearing usually commences shortly after marriage. A woman's status is enhanced the more children she bears. Living with extended families is the norm. Children who do not marry tend to live with their extended families. Young adults who move to the city to go to school live with extended family rather than living alone generally. Divorce does not occur unless it is initiated by the husband (Community University Health Care Center, n.d.).

Parenting in the Latino Culture

Latinos come from different Spanish-speaking lands such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, Dominican Republic and South America. Latinos of Mexican origin compose the largest population in the United States (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). Eight percent of the student body in St. Paul Public Schools has Spanish as their first language (Children, Families & Learning, 2002). However, there are many more Latino students in the district, but the data is collected only on language spoken.

When examining family values it may be more beneficial to look at class rather than culture according to Lynch and Hanson (1998). Class phenomena may provide more insight about a family related to their worldview and experiences with freedom and self-identity. Although there are cultural frames around which the family organizes itself and functions, the traditional format is changing. Lynch and Hanson (1998) also report that the concept of machismo, an absolute patriarchy of the father, is having less of an influence on the dynamics and structure of contemporary Mexican American families. Joint decision making and greater equality of male and female roles is now more often characterized of Mexican American families. One important contributing factor is the increase of women's employment outside of the home.

There has been some increase in the educational attainment of Latinos in the United States. According to Lynch and Hanson (1998) the proportion of Latinos age 25 and older with a high school diploma has increased from 45.7% in 1983 to 53.1% in 1993. One of the reasons that Latinos give for immigrating to the United States is to ensure a better education for their children. Because the rules and procedures of the U.S., education systems are new to them, they may appear not to have strong educational values.

There are many Latino families that believe in the Catholic religion, thus many of the traditions and beliefs are religious based. Latinos adhere to the collective sense, which often results in extended family configurations that offer valuable support services. Most Latino families remain two-parent families throughout their lives. The divorce rate is lower for this population than for the Anglo group (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). Single-parent households are on the rise.

Mexican American children have a more field-sensitive cognitive style than children from other ethnic groups according to Lynch and Hanson (1998). This implies a high sensitivity to nonverbal indicators of feelings and it is operationalized in the Latino cultural concept of personalismo. This concept is coupled with interpersonal respect and supports the value stance on the various Latino groups.

According to Lynch and Hanson (1998) when one marries, it is for the purpose of having children as children validate the marriage. The parent-child relationship is more important than the marital relationship. Parents tend to be very nurturing, indulgent and permissive with young children. The attitude is to placate them, not to push them to achieve the next developmental level or milestone. This can create a problem when the children enter school. They may come to school not knowing how to button a coat or

dress themselves because everything has been done for them. It is not uncommon to see a preschooler with a baby bottle or a teen sitting on a mother's lap.

While positive emotions are encouraged, negative feelings are considered unacceptable (Torres-Martullo, 1982). Latino families emphasize adherence to convention, respect for authority and identity with the family. The children are also taught to have respect for elders. It is important to recognize the different norms around child rearing that exist for Latino families as compared to Anglo families so that enhancements can be made to meet their needs as parents.

Summary

This chapter described of Early Childhood Family Education and Family Literacy programs. The Family Literacy program within St. Paul Public Schools, specifically, was highlighted. This chapter also focused on working with immigrant families and the importance of being culturally aware of those who attend Family Literacy. Finally, it compared the three most represented parent populations: Hmong, Somali and Spanish. The culture and typical parenting behaviors of each culture were highlighted.

The ECFE program in Minnesota has proven to be effective in involving parents early and offering support to parents of every different background. It also strengthens families and helps parents to provide the best start possible for their children to grow up healthy and to develop in all areas.

While the goal of many immigrant parents is to learn English, the Family Literacy program in St. Paul Public Schools strives to not only meet this goal, but to strengthen the bond they have with their children as well. This program offers parent education with parent/child interaction time and English language learning classes for these parents.

It is important for teachers to be sensitive to the needs that new immigrants have. Understanding and appreciating similarities and differences help bridge the cultures together more easily. Educators will be more effective in getting messages across to parents if parents sense that their culture and their practices are respected.

Literature helps us understand these three cultures and their practices. While no two parents are exactly alike, we can see that the culture plays a large role in determining the underlying reasoning behind how and why people decide to parent the way they do. Each culture including: Hmong, Spanish and Somali, have their own beliefs and traditions that help form their parenting attitudes and behaviors.

By recognizing cultural differences and developing an appreciation for them, teachers can prepare lessons so that parents and children in the Family Literacy program can have a meaningful learning experience. If we want parents to get the most out of the Family Literacy program, we must take a closer at their individual attitudes and behaviors and be able to meet them where they are.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodology, including a description of the subjects, sample selection of the subjects to whom the survey was administered, development of the actual survey, procedures for data collection, procedures for data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study were parents enrolled in Family Literacy classes at six sites in St. Paul, Minnesota Public School District in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) during the fall semester of 2003. The post test participants were those parents who were still in attendance at the time of distribution. There were 18 class weeks between pre and post testing. Historically these sites have had a large number of Hmong, Spanish and Somali parents enrolled for Family Literacy during past years, although other languages have been reported in smaller numbers.

Sample Selection

From these six sites, all parents enrolled at each of the four ECFE/ Family Literacy sites were asked to participate in this study by the researcher. These sites include: Mount Airy, Johnson, Frogtown and Payne/ Phalen. There are three sessions each week, all of which involve parent/child interaction time. When parents separate and go to class without their children, they go with an ELL (English Language Learning) teacher two days and a parent educator the other day. In October there were 54 participants in attendance and in February there were 30 of the same parents still in attendance. There were 18 class weeks in between pre and post testing. The researcher

read a letter to the participants which the confidentiality of the surveys and informed consent. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix A.

Instrumentation

The researcher perceived that parents enrolled in Family Literacy would change in attitude and behavior regarding parenting issues. To determine if this perception was accurate, the researcher created a survey to measure the parents' attitudes and behaviors prior to attending a Family Literacy class. The researcher also created a survey to measure the parents' attitudes and behaviors after attending Family Literacy classes for 18 weeks. Because this instrument was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study, no tests of reliability or validity were conducted.

The survey consisted of 24 items and was written in 2 versions: English and Spanish. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B. Section one of the survey consisted of nine items relating to demographic information. Questions in this section addressed gender, age, race, marital status, income, level of education, employment status, language, and length of Family Literacy attendance.

Section two of the survey focused on parenting attitudes, covering items 1-11. Attitude statements were written for the participant to rate on a modified 3 point Likert scale of A (always)=3, S (sometimes)=2, and N (never)=1. These statements included items such as, "I like reading to my child" and "It is easy to be a parent." During a pilot test of the instrument, prior to the start of the study, parent educators who work directly with the Family Literacy participants said that the language and the response scale needed to be simple. These parent educators stated that the parent participants had a very limited use of English and indicated that a 5 point scale was too complicated for them.

Section three of the survey addressed the parenting behaviors of the participants. This section covered questions 1-13 and used a modified 3 point Likert scale of N (no)=1, S (sometimes)=2 and Y (yes) for=3 rating each question. In this section parents were asked if they read to their children each day, limit the use of television, and encourage their children to express their anger, for example. Again, the 3 point scale was used due to English language and confusion concerns.

Data Collection

Prior to pre-test distribution, the researcher coded a number on each survey to be distributed. The researcher used the same number for the post-test survey. The researcher distributed the pre-test surveys to the class in October, 2003. In February of 2004, the researcher distributed and collected the post-test surveys to parents at each Family Literacy site. The researcher distributed post-test surveys only to parents who were in attendance for the pre-test survey. There were Hmong interpreters that interpreted for Hmong speakers during the pre and post testing. There was no interpreter for the other languages represented. The test was written in Spanish and English.

Data Analysis

The surveys received from the participating parents were processed at the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer Center. Data from the surveys were examined using descriptive statistics to classify, compare, and summarize the results.

The instrument was divided into three separate sections. Analysis on section one, demographic information, included frequency distributions, percentages, mean, median and standard deviations.

In sections two and three, t-test analysis was used to analyze the data. This resulted in comparative data related to differences in parent attitude and behaviors after completing the course.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified by the researcher relating to the sample, data collection, and the instrument used to collect data. Due to the fact that the researcher developed the research instrument, it was not tested for validity or reliability.

Participants in the study may have misinterpreted questions on the survey, therefore skewing the results. Their understanding of language may also have been limited.

Because of the small sample size, it limits generalizability of the results. Since there were only three response categories, it made it more difficult to measure changes.

Participants in the study may be the child's grandparent.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter includes the results of the pre- and post-test surveys comparing the parenting attitudes and behaviors before and after participating in an ECFE/ Family Literacy class for parents whose primary language was other than English. The demographic information statistics will be reported first, followed by an item analysis, and research hypotheses findings. A discussion of the findings will conclude the chapter.

Demographic Information

Demographic information was collected for descriptive purposes only during pre-testing. Questions were asked regarding gender, age, race, marital status, number of children, age of children, level of education, employment status and length of Family Literacy attendance. There were a total of 54 pre-test surveys sent out to parents attending Family Literacy classes in St. Paul in October, 2003. Out of the 54 surveys distributed, 54 pre-tests were returned.

Of the 54 parents who completed the pre-test, only 30 attended the February where they were post-tested. Thus comparisons between pre and post tests could only be made on 30 paired responses. Completers were the parents who participated at the October pre-test and the February meeting (=30 respondents). Non-completers were the people who participated in October, but dropped or were not in attendance at the ECFE/ Family Literacy program during February post-testing.

Age

Parents were asked to indicate their age. Of the 54 participants, 3 (5.6%) were under 19 years, 24 (44.4%) were 20-29 years, 18 (33.3%) were 30-39 years, and 9

(16.7%) were 40 years or older. There did not seem to be a pattern due to age between completers and non-completers using visual inspection. See Table 1.

Table 1. Age

Respondent	19 or younger	20-29 years	30-39 years	40 or older	Total
Completer	1 3.3%	11 36.7%	13 43.3%	5 16.7%	30 100.0%
Non-Completer	2 8.3%	13 54.2%	5 20.8%	4 16.7%	24 100.0%
Total	3 5.6%	24 44.4%	18 33.3%	9 16.7%	54 100.0%

Marital Status

Participants were asked to describe their marital status of unmarried or married/partnered. Of the 54 participants, 6 (11.1%) responded unmarried, and 48 (88.9%) responded married or partnered. There did not seem to be a pattern on marital status between completers and non-completers using visual inspection. See Table 2.

Table 2. Marital Status

Respondent	Unmarried	Married/ partnered	Total
Completer	2 6.7%	28 93.3%	30 100.0%
Non-Completer	4 16.7%	20 83.3%	24 100.0%
Total	6 11.1%	48 88.9%	54 100.0%

Education

Most participants had an 8th grade education or less. The level of education varied from 8th grade or less to post graduate work. Twenty three participants (43.3%)

had 8th grade or less years of school, 5 (9.4%) had some high school, 17 (32.1%) had a high school diploma/GED, 3 (5.7%) had some college or trade school beyond high school, 3 (5.7%) had a bachelor's degree and 2 (3.8%) had a graduate or professional school degree. There did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers on level of education using visual inspection. See Table 3.

Table 3. Education

Education	Completer	Non-Completer	Total
8 th grade or less	16 53.3%	7 30.4%	23 43.3%
Some high school	1 3.3%	4 17.4%	5 9.4%
High school diploma/ GED	10 33.3%	7 30.4%	17 32.1%
Some college	0 0.0%	3 13.0%	3 5.7%
Bachelor's degree	2 6.7%	1 4.3%	3 5.7%
Graduate school	1 3.3%	1 4.3%	2 3.8%
Total	30 100.0%	23 100.0%	53 100.0%

Employment Status

Parents were asked to describe their current employment status. Of the 54 participants, 5 (9.3%) reported being employed 25 hours or more per week. Seven (13.0%) of employed parents were employed less than 25 hours per week, 12 (22.2%) were unemployed, but seeking employment, and 30 (55.6%) reported being unemployed, not seeking employment. Again, there did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers, due to employment status, using visual inspection. See Table 4.

Table 4. Employment Status

Respondent	Employed/>2 4 hrs/wk	Employed/<2 5 hrs/wk	Unemployed/ seeking	Unemployed/ not seeking	Total
Completer	3 10.0%	6 20.0%	5 16.7%	16 53.3%	30 100.0%
Non-Completer	2 8.3%	1 4.2%	7 29.2%	14 58.3%	24 100.0%
Total	5 9.3%	7 13.0%	12 22.2%	30 55.6%	54 100.0%

Income

Parents were asked to report their household's total yearly income, before taxes.

Of the 54 participants, 18 (39.1%) reported an income of under \$10,000, 15 (32.6%) \$10,000-\$19,000, 11 (23.9%) \$20,000-\$29,000, 1 (2.2%) \$30,000- \$39,000 and 1 (2.2%) \$50,000-\$74,000. Using visual inspection, there did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers on income level. See Table 5.

Table 5. Income

Respondent	Under \$10K	\$10K to \$19,999	\$20K to \$29,999	\$30K to \$39,999	\$50Kto \$74,999	Total
Completer	9 34.6%	7 26.9%	9 34.6%	0 0.0%	1 3.8%	26 100.0%
Non-Completer	9 45.0%	8 40.0%	2 10.0%	1 5.0%	0 0.0%	20 100.0%
Total	18 39.1%	15 32.6%	11 23.9%	1 2.2%	1 2.2%	46 100.0%

Race

Parents were asked to indicate their race. Of the 54 participants, 4 (7.4%) respondents were Black/ African/ African American, 24 (44.4%) were Hispanic or

Latino, 25 (46.3%) were Asian and 1 (1.9%) selected the other, single race. There did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers on race using visual inspection. See Table 6.

Table 6. Race

Respondents	Black/ African	Hispanic/La tino	Asian	Other/ single race	Total
Completer	2 6.7%	13 43.3%	15 50.0%	0 0.0%	30 100.0%
Non-completer	2 8.3%	11 45.8%	10 41.7%	1 4.2%	24 100.0%
Total	4 7.4%	24 44.4%	25 46.3%	1 1.9%	54 100.0%

English as a First Language

Respondents were asked if English was their first language. Of the 54 participants 54 (100.0%) reported that English was not their first language. There did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers using visual inspection. See Table 7.

Table 7. English as a First Language

Respondent	NO	Total
Completer	30 100.0%	30 100.0%
Non-Completer	24 100.0%	24 100.0%
Total	54 100.0%	54 100.0%

First Language

Those who answered "no" were asked to report their first language. There seemed to be a pattern between completers and non-completers. Those participants who were the only one who spoke their language seemed to have been more likely to drop. See Table 8.

Table 8. First Language

Language	Completer	Non-Completer	Total
Arabic	0 0.0%	1 4.2%	1 1.9% 3.3%
Burmese	0 0.0%	1 4.2%	1 1.9%
Chinese	1 3.3%	0 0.0%	1 1.9%
Hmong	11 36.7%	6 25.0%	17 31.5%
Japanese	0 0.0%	1 4.2%	1 1.9%
Somali	2 6.7%	2 8.3%	4 7.4%
Spanish	13 43.3%	11 45.8%	24 44.4%
Vietnam	3 10.0%	2 8.3%	5 9.3%
Total	30 100.0%	24 100.0%	54 100.0%

Length of Family Literacy Attendance

When respondents were asked about the length of their participation in Family Literacy, most of the participants responded that they have attended less than one year.

Thirty three parents (61.1%) indicated less than one year, 16 (29.6%) 1-2 years and 5 (9.3%) more than two years. There did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers on length of Family Literacy program attendance using visual inspection. See Table 9.

Table 9. Length of Family Literacy Attendance

Respondents	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	More than 2 years	Total
Completers	16 53.3%	10 33.3%	4 13.3%	30 100.0%
Non-Completers	17 70.8%	6 25.0%	1 4.2%	24 100.0%
Total	33 61.1%	16 29.6%	5 9.3%	54 100.0%

Gender

Section one of the survey addressed demographic information including gender. Of the participants in this study, there were 52 women (96.3%) and 2 men (3.7%). There did not seem to be a pattern between completers and non-completers on gender using visual inspection. See Table 10.

Table 10. Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Completer	2 6.7%	28 93.3%	30 100.0%
Non-Completer	0 0.0%	24 100.0%	24 100.0%
Total	2 3.7%	52 96.3%	54 100.0%

Item Analysis

Section two of the pre-test survey addressed parent attitudes. This section covered items number 1 through 11. Eleven attitude statements were rated on a modified 3 point Likert scale of always (A), sometimes (S) and never (N).

The mean scores, standard deviations and standard mean error for each item are listed on Table 11. The attitude items in section two of the survey ranged from means of 1.79 to 3.00. The attitude statements with the high mean scores ranging from 2.87, always, and up (maximum score of 3) were items 1, I want to know more about how children learn and grow; item 3, I teach my child what is right and wrong; and item 10, I teach my child to respect others. Items with low mean scores, ranging from 2.08, sometimes to never (minimum score of 1), were identified as items 7, I often get angry with my child; and item 9, it is easy to be a parent. The mean scores for the completers and non-completers were almost identical for the top 3 items and for the average overall score. See Table 11.

Table 11. Pre Survey Attitude Comparison of Completers and Non-Completers

Attitude	Complete did respond/ complete program	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I want to know more about how children learn and grow.	Completer	29	2.93	.258	.048
	Non-Completer	24	3.00	.000	.000
My family and community help me as a parent.	Completer	30	2.33	.547	.100
	Non-Completer	23	2.39	.583	.122
I teach my child what is right and wrong.	Completer	30	2.90	.305	.056
	Non-Completer	23	2.83	.388	.081
I can make my child do what I want.	Completer	30	2.37	.556	.102
	Non-Completer	24	2.21	.509	.104
I am a good example for my child.	Completer	30	2.50	.572	.104
	Non-Completer	24	2.67	.482	.098
I have rules about how much TV my children watch.	Completer	30	2.33	.547	.100
	Non-Completer	24	2.21	.658	.134
I often get angry with my child.	Completer	30	1.90	.481	.088
	Non-Completer	24	1.79	.509	.104
I like reading to my children.	Completer	30	2.47	.571	.104
	Non-Completer	24	2.54	.588	.120
It is easy to be a parent.	Completer	30	1.93	.521	.095
	Non-Completer	24	2.08	.717	.146
I teach my child to respect others.	Completer	30	2.87	.434	.079
	Non-Completer	24	2.92	.282	.058
I listen to my child.	Completer	29	2.69	.471	.087
	Non-Completer	24	2.79	.415	.085
AVERAGE SCORE: PRETEST- PARENT ATTITUDES	Completer	30	2.4718	.20549	.03752
	Non-Completer	24	2.4937	.19971	.04077

Pre-survey behaviors of parents participating in Family Literacy were addressed in section three of the survey. See Table 12 for the mean, standard deviation and standard mean error for each question. Questions 1-13 of this section of the survey were asked with a modified 3 point Likert scale of N (no)=1, S (sometimes)=2, and Y (yes)=3. The items with the highest mean score, ranging from 2.67 and up (maximum of 3, yes) were items 9, I teach my child new words, and item 11, I point out things in a book. The item with the lowest mean score of 2.18 (minimum score of 1) was item 8, I read to my child every day. The average mean scores, the low mean scores and the high mean scores for the behaviors of the completers and non-completers were about the same. See Table 12.

Table 12. Pre Survey Behavior Comparison of Completers and Non-Completers

Behavior	Complete did respond/ complete program	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
I play with my child.	Completer	29	2.59	.501	.093
	Non-Completer	22	2.68	.568	.121
I let my child do things for him/herself.	Completer	29	2.69	.471	.087
	Non-Completer	22	2.50	.598	.127
I try different things when my child isn't listening.	Completer	29	2.38	.561	.104
	Non-Completer	22	2.45	.510	.109
I decide how much time my child watches TV	Completer	29	2.28	.591	.110
	Non-Completer	22	2.32	.716	.153
I help my child describe how he/she is feeling.	Completer	28	2.61	.497	.094
	Non-Completer	22	2.50	.802	.171
I tell my child how I feel.	Completer	29	2.38	.622	.130
	Non-Completer	21	2.52	.680	.148
I help my child find different ways to say he/she is angry.	Completer	29	2.28	.702	.130
	Non-Completer	21	2.52	.680	.148
I read to my child every day.	Completer	30	2.17	.592	.108
	Non-Completer	22	2.18	.664	.142
I teach my child new words.	Completer	29	2.76	.511	.095
	Non-Completer	21	2.67	.658	.144
My child sits on my lap when I read to him/her.	Completer	30	2.37	.669	.122
	Non-Completer	22	2.45	.800	.171
I point out things in a book.	Completer	30	2.83	.461	.084
	Non-Completer	22	2.77	.528	.113
I tell stories to my child.	Completer	30	2.67	.606	.111
	Non-Completer	22	2.41	.666	.142
I sing songs with my child.	Completer	30	2.60	.563	.103
	Non-Completer	22	2.50	.673	.143
AVERAGE SCORE: PRETEST- PARENT BEHAVIORS	Completer	29	2.4989	.23907	.04439
	Non-Completer	22	2.4992	.29370	.06262

Section two of the post-test survey addressed parent attitudes. This section covered items number 1 through 11. Eleven attitude statements were rated on a modified 3 point Likert scale of always (A), sometimes (S) and never (N).

The mean scores, standard deviations and standard mean error for each item are listed on Table 13. The attitude items in section two of the survey ranged from means of 1.87 to 2.90. The attitude statements with the highest mean scores, ranging from 2.73, sometimes, and up (maximum score of 3) were items 1, I want to know more about how children learn and grow; item 3, I teach my child what is right and wrong; and item 10, I teach my child to respect others. Items with low mean scores, ranging from 1.87 and lower were identified. Two items had a low mean score of 1.87. These were items 7, I often get angry with my child; and item 9, it is easy to be a parent.

Table 13. Completer Post Test Attitudes

Attitude Item	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
I want to know more about how children learn and grow.	2.86	29	.351	.065
My family and community help me as a parent.	2.47	30	.681	.124
I teach my child what is right and wrong.	2.73	30	.450	.082
I can make my child do what I want.	2.47	30	.507	.093
I am a good example for my child.	2.60	30	.498	.091
I have rules about how much TV my children watch.	2.33	30	.547	.100
I often get angry with my child.	1.87	30	.434	.079
I like reading to my children.	2.60	30	.498	.091
It is easy to be a parent.	1.87	30	.571	.104
I teach my child to respect others.	2.90	30	.305	.056
I listen to my child	2.59	29	.501	.093
Average post test parent attitudes	2.4758	30	.21042	.03842

Post-survey behaviors of parents participating in Family Literacy are addressed in section three of the survey. See Table 14 for the mean, standard deviation and standard mean error for each question. Items 1-13 of this section of the survey were rated with a modified 3 point Likert scale of N (no)=1, S (sometimes)=2, and Y (yes)=3. The survey items with the highest mean score, ranging from 2.83 and up (maximum of 3) were items 9, I teach my child new words; and item 11, I point things out in a book. Items with low scores, ranging from 2.30 and lower (minimum score of 1), were identified. These were items 7, I help my child find different ways to say he/she is angry; and item 8, I read to my child every day.

Table 14. Completer Post Test Behaviors

Behavior Item	Mean	N	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean
I play with my child	2.59	29	.501	.093
I let my child do things for him/herself.	2.69	29	.471	.087
I try different things when my child isn't listening.	2.38	29	.494	.092
I decide how much time my child watches TV.	2.66	29	.484	.090
I help my child describe how he/she is feeling.	2.50	28	.577	.109
I tell my child how I feel.	2.66	29	.614	.114
I help my child find different ways to say he/she is angry.	2.28	29	.751	.139
I read to my child every day.	2.30	30	.535	.098
I teach my child new words.	2.83	29	.384	.071
My child sits on my lap when I read to him/her.	2.70	30	.466	.085
I point things out in a book.	2.87	30	.507	.093
I tell stories to my child.	2.40	30	.621	.113
I sing songs with my child.	2.57	30	.679	.124
Average score: Posttest-parent behaviors.	2.5650	29	.27218	.05054

Using a paired sample t-test on the pre-test and post-test attitude items of completers, no significant differences were found on the individual 11 items or on the average post-test total of parent attitudes. See Table 15.

Table 15. Attitude Items Paired Sample

Attitude Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I want to know more about how children learn and grow.	.812	28	.424
My family and community help me as a parent.	-.779	29	.442
I teach my child what is right and wrong.	1.720	29	.442
I can make my child do what I want.	-.902	29	.375
I am a good example for my child.	-.682	29	.501
I have rules about how much TV my children watch.	.000	29	1.000
I often get angry with my child.	.372	29	.712
I like reading to my children.	-1.161	29	.255
It is easy to be a parent.	.626	29	.536
I teach my child to respect others.	-.372	29	.712
I listen to my child	1.000	28	.326
Avg. post prnt. attitudes	-.077	29	.939

A paired sample t-test was used to determine if there were any significant differences on behavior on the individual 13 items and the total average score. See Table 16. There was one significant difference at the .01 level; item 4, I decide how much time my child watches TV. On that item a significant difference was found at the .01 level. On the pre-test they scored 2.28 whereas on the post-test they scored 2.66.

Three trends were found between the pre-test and the post-test paired behavior samples. Trends were found on item 6, I tell my child how I feel; item 10, my child sits on my lap when I read to him/her; and item 12, I tell stories to my child. For item 6, I tell my child how I feel, the mean score on the pre-test was 2.38 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.66. The mean score increased. For item 10, my child sits on my lap when I read to him/her, the mean score on the pre-test was 2.37 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.70. The mean score increased. For item 12, I tell stories to my child, the mean score on

the pre-test was 2.67 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.40. The mean score decreased.

Table 16. Behavior Paired Samples

Behavior Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I play with my child	.000	28	1.000
I let my child do things for him/herself.	.000	28	1.000
I try different things when my child isn't listening.	.000	28	1.000
I decide how much time my child watches TV.	-2.807	28	.009
I help my child describe how he/she is feeling.	.721	27	.477
I tell my child how I feel.	-1.864	28	.073
I help my child find different ways to say he/she is angry.	.000	28	1.000
I read to my child every day.	-1.161	29	.255
I teach my child new words.	-.701	28	.489
My child sits on my lap when I read to him/her.	-2.763	29	.010
I point things out in a book.	-.372	29	.712
I tell stories to my child.	1.975	29	.058
I sing songs with my child.	.254	29	.801
Average score: Posttest-parent behaviors.	-1.269	28	.215

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one stated there will be a difference in the attitudes of parent participants upon completion of the parenting program. To test the hypothesis a paired sample t-test was run. After analyzing the results, no significant difference was found when comparing the parenting attitudes before and after attending the Family Literacy parenting classes. The null hypothesis was rejected. No differences in parent attitudes were revealed between the October and February survey dates.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two stated there will be a difference in the behavior of parent participants upon completion of the parenting program. To test the hypothesis, a paired sample t-test was run. After analyzing the data, one significant difference was found when comparing the parenting behaviors before and after attending the Family Literacy parenting classes. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. On item 4, I decide how much time my child watches TV, a significant difference was found at the .01 level. The pre-test score was 2.28 whereas the post-test score was 2.66. The mean score increased. Parents increased in monitoring how much time their child could watch TV.

Three trends were found between the pre-test and the post-test paired behavior items. Trends were found on item 6, I tell my child how I feel; item 10, my child sits on my lap when I read to him/her; and item 12, I tell stories to my child. For item 6, I tell my child how I feel, the mean score on the pre-test was 2.38 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.66. The mean score increased. That is parents were more likely to tell their child how they feel. For item 10, my child sits on my lap when I read to him/her, the mean score on the pre-test was 2.37 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.70. The mean score increased. Parents

were more likely to have their child sit on their lap while reading. For item 12, I tell stories to my child, the mean score on the pre-test was 2.67 and on the post-test the mean score was 2.40. The mean score decreased.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis three stated there will be a difference between the pretest scores of those who completed the Family Literacy program and those who did not complete the program. To test the hypothesis a t-test was utilized. After analyzing the data there was no significant difference found when comparing pretest scores of completers and non-completers, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

This study was aimed at capturing the parenting attitude and behaviors of parent participants before and after attending the Family Literacy program in the St. Paul Public School District. Data was collected from 54 parents in October, 2003 and from 30 parents in February, 2004.

Section one of the survey revealed a description of the sample population participating in this study. The majority of the 54 pre-test participants were female (96.3%), married or partnered (88.9%) and over half the participants reported that they were unemployed and not seeking employment (55.6%). Approximately forty percent of the respondents were Spanish speaking (44.4%), age 20-29 years old (44.4%), had an education of 8th grade or less (43.3%) and had an income of under \$10,000 (39.1%).

No pattern could be detected using visual inspection of parents who would drop out the program in Tables 1-7 and 9. However on Table 8, it seemed that the individuals who were the only ones who spoke their language tended to not complete the program.

The Family Literacy program within the St. Paul Public Schools is unique in that it offers parent education one day per week. Unique as it was, this study is being conducted to develop baseline data for examining parenting attitudes and behaviors.

Because of the language barrier it is difficult to get accurate results of the first survey. When participants first start the program they may not understand much English therefore skewing the results. As time goes on their English skills should increase. If this is true, then it may be that they understand more of the survey and can answer more accurately at the second survey time.

Some of the findings in this study concur with the research discussed in the literature review. Mikulecky, Lloyd & Brannon (1994) reported that direct effects of the Parent and Child Together Time includes an increase in time parents spend reading to children, positive parent guidance, adults and children engaging in other forms of learning, parents' confidence as they interact with their children and perceptions of the parents' value of education. This study found that parents let their children sit on their lap more often when reading and the parents were more likely to tell the child how they felt.

As mentioned in the review of literature, when parents make connections with other parents in the group it offers them the opportunity to give and receive support. This could explain why there seemed to be a pattern of dropping the class for those participants who were the only one who spoke their language found in this study.

This study concurs with the information from Lynch and Hanson (1998). They reported that many times, in order to prevent offending or hurting someone else's feelings,

people from the Hmong culture will avoid direct confrontation, avoid saying "no", and avoid expressing anger or displeasure. This study found that parent attitudes and behaviors around anger did not change much due to the content presented in the class.

Lynch and Hanson (1998) also reported that until the age of 4 or 5, Hmong children's behavior is accepted usually without formal disciplining. Parents tend not to extend many limits on their children. Children are taught to suppress aggressive behavior, overt expressions of negative emotions, and personal grievances. They must inhibit strong feelings and exercise self-control in order to maintain family harmony. The communication pattern between parents and children is generally one way. The parent speaks to the child and the child listens. The protective and controlling behavior of Hmong parents comes from a basic distrust of outsiders. This concurs with the findings in this study. The parental attitudes and behaviors did not change much in regard to listening to their children, telling their child how they feel, helping their child describe how they feel, finding ways to say he/she is angry or telling their child when they are angry.

In the Latino culture, parents tend to be very nurturing, indulgent and permissive with young children (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). This could explain why the parent attitudes and behaviors did not change much between pre and post-testing in regard to the ability to make their child do what they want, or trying different things when their child isn't listening.

While positive emotions are encouraged, negative feelings are considered unacceptable in the Latino culture (Torres- Martullo, 1982). This could also serve as an explanation of why the participants did not make much change between pre and post-testing attitudes and behaviors in the anger items of the survey.

Latino families emphasize adherence to convention, respect for authority and identity with the family. This concurs with the overall findings of the study in these areas. The

parents, overall, thought that teaching their children to respect others and teaching the child what is right and wrong was important.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the purpose, procedures and findings of this research. This chapter is also designed to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future studies in this area of study, as well as, recommendations for training and assistance to parent educators in Family Literacy programs.

Summary

The overall purpose of this research was to compare the attitudes and behaviors of Family Literacy parent participants in the St. Paul Public School district, while looking at perceptions of literacy importance and frequency of literacy activities at home. The research questions were:

1. There will be a difference in the attitudes of parent participants upon completion of the parenting program.
2. There will be a difference in the behavior of parent participants upon completion of the parenting program.
3. There will be difference between the pretest scores of those who completed the parenting program and those who did not complete the program.

The subjects of the study were parent participants in the St. Paul Public School District Family Literacy program in Minnesota during the 2003/2004 school year. There were 54 parents enrolled in three Family Literacy sites in St. Paul School District in October, 2003. Of the 54 participants in fall, 30 took the post test survey in February, which yields a return rate of 56%.

The instrument was developed by the researcher after review of recent literature on Family Literacy programs and current trends. The survey consisted of three sections. Section one requested the demographic information, including; age, marital status, education level, job status, income, race, language, length of participation in the program and gender. Section two of the survey consisted of 11 items representing participants' parenting attitudes. Parents were asked to rate their perception of each statement based on a Likert scale of A (always), S (sometimes) and N (never). Section three of the survey contained 13 items, which focused on capturing the behaviors of parents. Participants were asked to rank their response on a Likert scale of N (no), S (sometimes) and Y (yes).

The researcher distributed a pretest survey to each of the 54 participants at the four Family Literacy sites in October 2003. The researcher distributed the posttest surveys in February 2004 to those 30 participants in attendance who completed the pretest surveys. The surveys were available in English and Spanish. A Hmong interpreter was present to translate to the Hmong participants.

The data obtained from the surveys was processed at the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer Center. The data was analyzed by the use of frequency counts, means, standard deviations, standard mean error, percentages and t-tests. The pre and post test surveys were matched and used in the tabulation of the data.

Demographic results were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The study indicated that the majority of respondents (96.3%) were female. The groups with the largest percentages were Spanish speaking (44.4%) and ages 20-29 years old (44.4%).

Other demographics were examined. Most of the parents were married or partnered (88.9%). Over half of the participants reported that they were unemployed and not seeking employment (55.6%). Over 40 percent of the survey respondents reported having an

education of 8th grade or less (43.3%). Over a third of the parents had an income of under \$10,000 (39.1%).

Three null hypotheses were stated by the researcher, two of the three were rejected. Hypothesis one stated there will be a change in parent attitude after attending parenting class. To test the hypothesis a paired sample t-test was run. After analyzing the data no significant difference was found when comparing the parenting attitudes before and after attending the Family Literacy parenting classes, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis two stated parents will make some change in parenting behavior after attending parenting classes. To test the hypothesis a paired sample t-test was run. After analyzing the data some significant difference was found when comparing the parenting behaviors before and after attending the Family Literacy parenting classes, therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis three stated there will be a difference between the pretest scores of those who completed the Family Literacy program and those who did not complete the program. To test the hypothesis a t-test was utilized. After analyzing the data there was no significant difference found when comparing pretest scores of completers and non-completers, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusions

This research assisted the researcher in drawing several conclusions regarding parent attitudes and behaviors in relation to the Family Literacy parent program. The most revealing area was the change in parenting behaviors. There was a change in some parenting behaviors from the time of pre-testing to post-testing. A statistical significant difference was found at the .01 level on item 4, which stated "I decide how much time my child watches TV". Three trends on behavior items were also found.

There was no significant difference in pre-test survey results of those who completed the program and those who did not. No significant differences in parent attitudes or behaviors were found.

The completers and non-completers attitude and behavior scores were almost identical.

Recommendations for Further Research

This survey was very comprehensive in coverage of parent attitudes and behaviors. However the researcher found the scale was too simple. This survey may have produced more accurate results if more points on the Likert scale were used and it was changed to a five point scale. The survey may have also produced more accurate results if translators were used for Somali speaking parent participants. None were available at the time of this study. Another possibility would be to conduct the survey using an interviewing method. Conducting the survey individually may produce more accurate results.

Conduct this study over a longer period of time. If it was repeated at the completion of the academic year instead of the end of 18 weeks, parenting attitudes and behaviors may be different.

In order to gather more convincing data for the Family Literacy parenting component, it may be beneficial if it was conducted with limited English speaking parents not enrolled in Family Literacy classes. It may also be useful to conduct the study with Family Literacy participants that do not have a parenting component included with their program.

Recommendations for Family Literacy Parent Educators

The information collected through this survey can be useful in identifying the concepts that need more focus in class for parent educators. The researcher recommends that parent educators focus on pointing out behaviors and reinforcing the behaviors they would like parents to increase.

Recommendations for program administration would include grouping those parent participants in sites where other people from their culture are located. This could decrease the drop out rate.

REFERENCES

- Adam, A. (1999, October 22). *Somali culture and Islamic values*. Conference held on Somali Culture and Islamic Values, Roosevelt High School, October 22, 1999.
- Briener, J., & Forehand, R. (1981). An assessment of the effects of parent training on clinic-referred children's school behavior. *Behavioral Assessment*, 3, 31-42.
- Community University Health Care Center. (n.d.). *Minnesota's Somali community*. (Adapted from: Cross Cultural Health Care Program, Pac-Med Clinics, 1200 12th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98144)
- Drews, K., Salus, M.K., & Dodge, D. (n.d.). *Child protective services- Inservice training for supervisors and workers*. Washington, DC: Creative Associates.
- Epstein, J.L. (1987). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, & F. Losel (Eds.), *Social intervention: Potential and constraints* (pp. 121-136). New York: De Gruyter.
- Gard, G.C., & Berry, K.K. (1986). Oppositional children: Taming tyrants. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 15, 148-158.
- Graziano, A.M., & Diament, D.M. (1992). Parent behavioral training. An examination of the paradigm. *Behavior Modification*, 16, 3-38.
- Heitritter, D.L. (1999). *Somali family strength: Working in the communities*. Minneapolis, MN: Family and Children's Service.
- History briefing. (n.d.). *Hmong Today*. Retrieved May 22, 2002, from: www.infoavailable.com/hmongstoday/index.html
- Henderson, A. (1988). Parents are a school's best friend. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, 148-153.

- Hughes, M. (1993). *You must not spank your children in America*. Forty-Sixth Annual Northwest Anthropology Conference, Bellingham, WA, March, 1993.
- Janes, H., & Kermani, H. (2001). Caregivers' story reading to young children in family literacy programs: Pleasure or punishment? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44, 455-464.
- Johnstone, T., & Hiatt, D. (1997). *Development of a school-based parent center for low income new immigrants*. Annual Meeting of the Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago, IL, March, 1997.
- Kurz-Riemer, K. (eds.) (2001). *A guide for implementing early childhood family education programs*. Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. Roseville, MN.
- Lee, F. Y. (1995). Asian parents as partners. *Young Children*. March, 1995.
- Lynch, E., & Hanson, M. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence*. Baltimore, Maryland. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Minnesota Department of Education (n.d.). *District Language Files*. Retrieved March 4, 2004, from: <http://cfl.state.mn.us/datactr/language/LD0203.pdf>
- Morrow, R.D. (1991). The challenge of southeast Asian parent involvement. *Principal*. 70 (3): 20-22.
- Mikulecky, L., Lloyd, P., & Brannon, D. (1994). *Evaluating parent/child interactions*. Indiana University.
- National Center for Family Literacy. (1997). Four components of family literacy programs. *The Family Literacy Answer Book*, pp. 24-28.

- Patterson, G.R., DeBaryshe, B.D., & Ramsey, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior. *American Psychologist*, 44, 329-335.
- Pecoraro, D., & Phommasouvanh, B. (1991). Limited English proficient parent involvement project. Overview user's guide.
- Popkin, M. (n.d.). Active Parenting Publishers. 810 Franklin Court, Suite B. Marietta, GA 30067.
- Reese, L., & Gallimore, R. (2000). Immigrant Latinos' cultural model of literacy development: An evolving perspective on home-school discontinuities. *American Journal of Education*, 108, 103-134.
- Rose, P. (1983). *Working with immigrant families*. Staten Island, NY: The Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc.
- Russell, M., & White, B. (2001). Practice with immigrant and refugees: Social worker and client perspectives. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 9, 73-92.
- Thao, D. (2000). *Hmong parent's perception toward children education in minneapolis, minnesota*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie.
- Torres-Matrullo, C. (1982). Cognitive therapy of depression in the Puerto Rican female. In R.M. Becerra, M.Karno, & J. Escobar (Eds.), *Mental health and Hispanic Americans: Clinical perspectives* (pp. 101-113). New York: Grune & Stratton.

APPENDIX A

Hello Family Literacy Parent Educators!

I am excited to start to conduct my research at your Family Literacy site this fall. If you are not familiar with what I am doing I will tell you a bit about the study.

I will be conducting a pre- and post-test to Family Literacy parents in your classes. It will measure their attitudes and behaviors around parenting and literacy. I will be coming out to your site the week of Sept. 15th to administer the pre-test surveys to the parents.

There are a couple of things that I am asking ahead of time.

1. Please do not do the demographic survey with the Family Literacy class the first week of class. They will have to complete it for my survey and I do not want them to have to complete it twice. I will get the demographics for your Family Literacy classes turned in for you.
2. Please have a parent class list ready for me when I come.
3. Please allow the entire class period for them to fill out the survey.
4. Please have pens or pencils available for the parents.
5. The post-test survey will take place the last 2 weeks of the semester. (We will start the week of Jan. 5)

Here are the dates and times I will be at your site:

Frogtown FRC: Monday, Sept. 15- 9:00

Payne/ Phalen: Tuesday, Sept. 16- 9:00

Johnson: Thursday, Sept. 18- 8:30

Mt. Airy: (I need to find out your PE day)

I truly appreciate your support in this research process!

Gina Hass

Memo

To: Family Literacy Teachers
CC: Ann Lovrien
From: Gina Hass
Date: 1/223/04
Re: Post Testing for Family Literacy Parents

Hello!

I am planning to come out to your site to post test the Family Literacy parents in your classes on the day and time listed below. I am guessing that it will take about 20 minutes (we don't have to fill out the demographic sheet this time). I have the class list of those who participated before. You may want to plan for the parents who did not participate in the pre-test to do something else during that time.

I thank you very much for your cooperation. Please contact me if you have additional questions (793-5418),

Mount Airy: Wednesday, February 18, 9:00

Johnson: Thursday, February 19, 8:30 and 12:30

Frogtown: Monday, February 23, 9:00

Payne/ Phalen: Tuesday, February 24,

9:00

APPENDIX B

Attitudes of Parents Who Are Enrolled in Family Literacy

Section II

For each of the following attitude statements, please circle the letter that best represents how you relate to each statement by selecting a letter A (ALWAYS), S (SOMETIMES), N (NEVER). All information is strictly confidential. The best response is your honest one.

A=ALWAYS

S=SOMETIMES

N=NEVER

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. I want to know more about how children learn and grow. | A | S | N |
| 2. My family and community help me as a parent. | A | S | N |
| 3. I teach my child what is right and wrong. | A | S | N |
| 4. I can make my child do what I want. | A | S | N |
| 5. I am a good example for my child. | A | S | N |
| 6. I have rules about how much television my children watch. | A | S | N |
| 7. I often get angry with my child. | A | S | N |
| 8. I like reading to my child. | A | S | N |
| 9. It is easy to be a parent. | A | S | N |
| 10. I teach my child to respect others. | A | S | N |
| 11. I listen to my child. | A | S | N |

Section III

Please read each statement. Mark each item with the appropriate rating.

N=NO S= SOMETIMES Y=YES

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. I play with my child. | N | S | Y |
| 2. I let my child do things for his/herself
(like get dressed, clean up). | N | S | Y |
| 3. I try different things when my child is not listening. | N | S | Y |
| 4. I decide how much time my child watches T.V. | N | S | Y |
| 5. I help my child describe how he/she is feeling. | N | S | Y |
| 6. I tell my child how I feel. | N | S | Y |
| 7. I help my child find different ways to say he/she is angry. | N | S | Y |
| 8. I read to my child every day. | N | S | Y |
| 9. I teach my child new words. | N | S | Y |
| 10. My child sits on my lap when I read to him/her. | N | S | Y |
| 11. I point out things in a book. | N | S | Y |
| 12. I tell stories to my child. | N | S | Y |
| 13. I sing songs with my child. | N | S | Y |