

Through this enhancement, I was able to gain extra knowledge from multiple perspectives about the effect of parent involvement on a child's reading abilities and interest. I have benefited from this experience greatly because I will be able to take and apply what I have learned into my future classroom. Before this course, I had not thought deeply about how parent involvement impacts a child in the classroom. Specifically, it was interesting applying the concept of parent involvement to a skill that is essential for a child's academic growth. I had never considered how parent involvement could affect a child's reading abilities and interest before and I was surprised by the results I found. In addition to the research project that we already were required to complete for this course, I completed several additional interviews with teachers, parents, and students. I wanted to get multiple different perspectives on my research question in order to develop a comprehensive conclusion. I do not think I would have been able to gather the information and knowledge that I was able to about this research question without these outside interviews and conversations with others. All of these interviews that I will be discussing were not included in my teacher research presentation.

In my teacher research presentation, I interviewed my cooperating teacher, Mrs. Hunt, regarding parent involvement in her classroom. This teacher was a fourth grade teacher in a low income school. In addition, I wanted to interview a teacher with a different situation in order to include all factors that could affect parent involvement on literacy. Therefore, I interviewed a kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Carson, from Hanover county which is a relatively higher income area. This teacher was different from my cooperating teacher in many ways which I thought would give me a different perspective on my topic. However, I was fascinated by the fact that most of their answers were similar. Both of them believed that parent involvement was important to literacy development. For example, when asked, "How important do you think it is for parents to be involved with their child's literacy development," Mrs. Carson responded, "Extremely important, we have tons of kids that come to school and their parents don't read to them at all and you can tell." When Mrs. Hunt was asked the same question, she agreed that it is important

and that you can tell through a child's literacy progress if their parents are supporting them at home or not. However, the level at which their student's parents were involved was significantly different. When given a scale from one to ten, ten being the most involved, Mrs. Carson gave her student's parents an eight and Mrs. Hunt gave her student's parents a 3.

I noticed that if either of these teachers had completely different answers, it was likely due to the fact that they were in areas with differing average socioeconomic statuses. For example, in Hanover, the schools implement a lot of extra programs and incentives to get parents involved in their child's reading development such as free flying squirrels tickets, free pizza, and reading game night. In Nottoway, Mrs. Hunt said that their school does not have any programs like that, mainly because none of the parents would show up. When interviewing the children in this class, I realized that this is due to the fact that many of their parents are single parents or have to work multiple jobs. Additionally, I found from these student interviews that 70% of students in Mrs. Hunt's class said that they do not read with their parents. 60% of these students stated that they do not have anyone in their home who can help them with their homework. In general, there seemed to be a correlation between socioeconomic status and parent involvement that I would have liked to explore further.

The last interview I conducted was with a parent of a fifth grader from Hanover county. I do not know many parents of elementary school students, which meant I was only able to find one parent to interview. However, I got great feedback from her and learned a lot about what a parent needs from a teacher. The biggest struggle that this parent has is communication with the classroom teacher. This mom felt that she was not able to be as involved with her child's reading development as she wanted because of lack of communication from the teacher. She believes that parent involvement is super important throughout a child's literacy development. Specifically, she said, "Parent involvement is very important, especially because Drew does have some comprehension issues and he does go to extra reading, so it is very important for us to try and work with him and use specific tools that the teacher told us to use at home." When I

have my own classroom in the future, I plan on communicating with my student's parents regularly and updating them at least three times a week. For students with reading interventions, I would update their parents multiple times a week and give them suggestions of what they could be doing at home to support them.

In addition to the research and interviews that I completed, I wanted to leave my partnership experience by leaving some type of impact behind after concluding my research. Since I knew that most of the student's parents were struggling at home financially and had to take on a lot of extra responsibilities in order to support their families, I wanted to provide them with tips that they could use with their child in order to support their literacy development. All of the ideas I gave were strategies that were not time consuming and do not require a lot of effort from the parents. These strategies include having students read road signs as they are driving in the car and asking their child about their day while prompting them to use details in their response. I feel like a lot of the time parents aren't as involved with their child's reading development because they do not know how to do so which is why I thought the paper I sent home was a helpful resource for parents.

Overall, I have learned many things from this experience that I will take with me into student teaching and beyond. I learned how important it is to communicate with parents and provide opportunities for parents to be involved with their child's reading journey. Also, I learned to be sympathetic to parents who are not able to be as involved as you would want because of outside circumstances such as working two jobs, being a single parent, etc. In the future, I would like to learn more about how socioeconomic status affects parent involvement. I would want to look at this in all aspects of a child's academic career as well, instead of only looking at literacy.