

Promoting Strength-based Leadership Opportunities for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents

Dr. Katelyn D. Barlet
kdbarlet@lancaster.k12.pa.us

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Dr. Katelyn Barlet, School District of Lancaster

Positions:

Literacy Specialist, School District of Lancaster
Adjunct Professor, Eastern Mennonite University
Coordinator of ESL, School District of Lancaster
ESL Specialist, School District of Lancaster

Education:

Adult Education Ed.D.
Language and Literacy Education M.Ed.
Educational Leadership M.Ed.
Elementary Education B.S.Ed.

Certifications:

Elementary Education
English as a Second Language Program Specialist
Reading Specialist
Principal/Supervisory

Introduce yourself to your elbow partner

- Ask your partner:
 - Where are you from?
 - What is your role or profession?
 - How do you support English Language Learners in your current role or profession?





Session Goals/Objectives

1. To explore effective techniques for actively collaborating with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds
2. To understand the themes presented through current research regarding parent involvement
3. To develop a plan for successfully collaborating with CLD families in your school/setting

Parent Involvement, Background Information

- Types of Parent Involvement
- Types of Parents
- Themes in the research about CLD parent involvement





Six Types of Parent Involvement

(Epstein et al., 2002)

1. **Parenting:** Assisting parents in areas that foster awareness of their children's growth and development
2. **Communicating:** Encouraging efficient parent-teacher communication regarding school happenings, student work and progress, and struggles or successes
3. ***Volunteering:** Effectively recruiting, training, and scheduling parent volunteers in the classroom and within the school community
4. **Learning at Home:** Providing information and strategies for parents to use with their children in the home setting
5. **Decision Making:** Engaging parents in the exchange of ideas through collaboration while working toward a shared goal
6. **Collaboration with the Community:** Involving local community members and organizations with schools to act as role models, mentors, and to provide support and inspiration for students and teachers



Types of Parents

(Kauffman, Perry & Prentiss, 2001)

4 Types of Parents (varying levels of involvement)

- **Type 1:** Parents who participate in school events and take part in decision-making activities (leaders)
- **Type 2:** Parents who appreciate the school's efforts regarding communication and support their children from home (More passive participants, generally do not join parent groups or programs)
- **Type 3:** Parents taking a “superficial” interest in their children's education (may attend conferences but do not apply what is discussed)
- **Type 4:** Parents who are neither supportive nor involved

Thoughts?

- What is missing?
- What factors may be unique for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents that would inhibit them from “cleanly” fitting into these types?



Themes in the research about CLD Parent Involvement

4 Themes

1. **The Language Barrier:** One of the most significant hindrances in CLD parents' attempt to participate in their children's education
2. **Cultural Differences:** Developing awareness of cultural differences is essential for school personnel in order to most effectively connect with CLD families
3. **Parent/Teacher Roles:** Possible differences between perceived roles of parents and school personnel
4. **CLD Parents' Desire for their Children's Success:** Overall, CLD parents have a strong desire for their children to succeed in school

English Language Learners (ELLs) in our District

- 1,916 Active ELLs
- 17% of Student Population
- 77 ESL/Bilingual Teachers
- 38 Languages Spoken
 - 78% Spanish
 - 11% Nepali
 - 2% Haitian Creole
 - 1% Vietnamese
 - 5% Other
 - 1% Arabic
 - 1% Burmese
 - 1% Karen





Parent Involvement Programs in Our District

Programs are developed for various purposes:

- For parents to serve and help (Parent/Teacher Organization, PTO)
- For parents to advocate (Parent Advisory Council, PAC)
- For parents to understand or learn important information and expectations (parent/teacher conferences, back to school nights)
- To help parents with critical needs including basics needs, emotional support, or language needs (counseling programs, ESL classes, dental/vision services)
- To build community (school carnival, family events)
- To build capacity and engage parents as leaders (PTO, PAC, homeroom mother/father)

Parent Involvement Program Purpose and Examples	Type(s) of Parent	Type(s) of Parent Involvement
For parents to serve and help (Parent/Teacher Organization, PTO, homeroom parent)	Type 1	Type 3 and 5
For parents to advocate and help make decisions (Parent Advisory Council, PAC)	Type 1	Type 2 and 5
For parents to understand or learn important information and expectations (parent/teacher conferences, back to school nights)	Type 1, 2, and 3	Type 2 and 4
To help parents with critical needs including basics needs, emotional support, or language needs (counseling programs, ESL classes)	All types	Type 1, 2 and 4
To build community (school carnival, family events)	Type 1, 2, and 3	Type 2 and 6
To build capacity and engage parents as leaders (PTO, PAC, homeroom mother/father)	Type 1	Type 2, 5, and 6

Discuss with your Elbow Partner



- What **types of programs** or events does your school/organization offer for parents?
- For what **types of parents** are these programs designed?
- What **type of parent involvement** do these programs require or elicit?
- Are CLD parents effectively included in your school community?



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What I Noticed...

I was being asked to interpret for parent programs, but very few parents needing interpretation were in attendance.



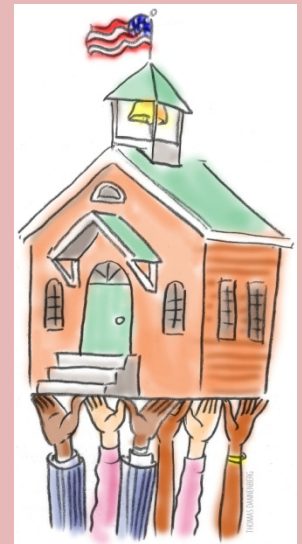
What CLD Parents Told Us...


- They felt unwelcome
- They felt intimidated or overwhelmed in a large group (talking too fast or too many conversations happening at the same time)
- They were unaware of the program(s)
- They had to work during the times programs were offered
- They did not have anyone to watch their children
- They did not understand what was being said



What We Decided to do About it...

- Develop a program that encouraged CLD parents to participate as a type 1 parent (leader) through a program that fostered parent involvement type 2 (communicating)
- Utilize our CLD parents' strengths to create a program that would increase communication among parents and school personnel within our school community





The Spanish Teaching/Learning Program

Structure of the Program:

- 8- week program to learn basic Spanish
- One hour each Thursday after school
- Agendas, sign in sheets, and materials generated each week by the facilitator
- Held in the parent resource center at the school
- Childcare and snacks provided
- The resource *Spanish for Gringos* (Harvey, 2008) was utilized

Who Participated:

- Native Spanish speaking mothers/grandmothers participated as teachers in the program
- Non- Spanish speaking mothers participated as learners
- School Employees (serving as facilitators)



Planning and Developing a Schedule

A planning session with the teachers was held prior to week 1. The teachers developed the following schedule:

- **Week 1:** Introductions (English and Spanish), Spanish words that are similar to English words, secrets to sound making, alphabet, family vocabulary
- **Week 2:** Review and expand on introductions, numbers and colors, school vocabulary, El/la; un/una
- **Week 3:** Popular phrases, expanding on basic conversations, questions, city vocabulary
- **Week 4:** Who's who?, conversation practice, telling the time/the date, weather vocabulary
- **Week 5:** Ser/estar, parts of the body vocabulary, medical vocabulary
- **Week 6:** Nature and animal vocabulary, food and restaurant vocabulary, verb conjugation
- **Week 7:** Job vocabulary, clothes/shopping vocabulary, house vocabulary
- **Week 8:** Commands, review, quiz



The Sessions

- The sessions were modified to authentically meet the needs of the mothers.
- The mothers provided both written and verbal feedback throughout the sessions which was used to inform future sessions.
- The mothers wanted the sessions to be relevant to what they presently needed (work environment, daily interactions, helping children learn Spanish).



At the beginning...

- The teachers were very apprehensive.
- One teacher was easily intimidated.
- The learners had a very basic awareness of Spanish. The sessions had to start with foundational elements of Spanish (letter sounds, names, basic introductions).
- The flow of the sessions was slightly disjointed.



By the end...

- The teachers were confident and were seen as the experts.
- The sessions ran smoothly.
- The mothers made connections with one another.
- The learners were able to communicate using basic Spanish sentences. They had tried to speak Spanish within the community.
- The mothers engaged in cross-cultural dialogue which deepened their understanding of one another.
- All of the mothers bonded over the difficulty of experiencing a language barrier.
- The mothers decided to end with a fiesta and brought in food items that were special to their culture.



Looking Forward

- Possibility of expansion to other schools
- Including fathers and other adult family members
- Including children
- Longer sessions
- Fully facilitated by parents

Discuss with your Elbow Partner



- What types of programs does your school/organization offer that engage CLD parents as leaders in your school community?
- How could you utilize parents' strengths or funds of knowledge to foster stronger connections within your school community?



Develop Your Plan

Create a **3-2-1** outline of ideas including:

- **3** things you can do to effectively include CLD parents in your school community
- **2** programs that are currently in existence which need to be altered, expanded, or eliminated
- **1** new program that you would like to start
 - Who would be involved?
 - Who would lead the program?
 - What materials would you need/use?
 - How would you develop the schedule of topics or meetings for your program?
 - What potential challenges might arise when developing your program?

Share your plan with your elbow partner



- Questions for reflection:
 - What did my plan include that my partner's didn't (and vice versa)?
 - What is one thing I would like to add to and delete from my plan?
 - What are my next steps?

Resources

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Questions?

köszönöm תודה dekuji
mahalo 고맙습니다
thank you
merci 謝謝 danke
Ευχαριστώ شكرا
どうもありがとう gracias



Thank you for coming!