

How Hispanic Parent Practices Developed

How Hispanic Parent Practices Developed Through an After School Literacy Program Impact  
Language Development Practices at Home.

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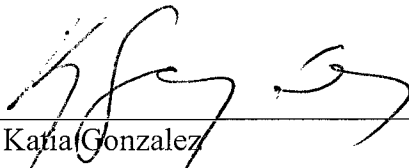
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### **Abstract**

Children who come from non-English speaking households tend to suffer academically due to language barriers. Parents agree it is important for their child to receive a good education, but they are unsure how to engage academically with them. Parental involvement is imperative for a child to succeed in school, and these parents want to become involved in their child's educational career. To help foster engagement, schools often offer programs for English Language Learners including translators, after school programs, and ESL teachers. Schools usually do not have any programs to support language learning or school support for the families. This study will explore the effectiveness of an after school program focused on parental involvement in a child's early language development.

This study's aim is to explore through qualitative methods if an after school program helped parents acquire skills and techniques to increase literacy learning at home and school. The goal of this study is to meet with these parents and learn about how these strategies taught in the program may have become embedded into their home lives, helping them engage academically with their children. During the course of this program, parents should become more confident on ways to help their child and promote language development. The study will examine whether this was the case.

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### Chapter 1

Proper learning requires comprehension in a variety of strategies, methods, and approaches (Cattanch, 2013 ). Understanding concepts and information takes time and develops when the mind is ready to process. There are many variables impacting the way children acquire meaningful learning and families are children's first educators. During school years, children are exposed to specific academic concepts and skills that can benefit from reinforcements provided at home. It is vital to have family involvement in a child's educational studies (Cattanch, 2013) since it can impact learning and achievement.

Strong relationships between family members and educators can often improve performance in student work ethics in school. According to Cattanch (2013), a variable that may impact connections between educators and families is language. The language barrier for English language learners makes learning frustrating for the Hispanic parents. The acquisition of a second language requires time and practice while still focusing on academic skills in the native language. The majority of the time the student is learning better English in school while struggling to understand their primary language at home. In school the students are learning proper grammar and the English language. Once the child leaves the school setting, he/she is not exposed to the English language. Their family's cultural ways, customs and the language that surrounds them makes it hard for the children to practice their English. This becomes difficult for the child to transition from the school to home setting. These language barriers create difficulty for the Hispanic parents and helping the children is more of a challenge (Cattanach, 2013).

One pathway that impacts a child's learning capabilities is the environment he/she is brought up in. Parental involvement is one of the main factors that affect a child's learning. According to Hartas, problems such as poverty, low educational achievement, and single parent

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household are factors that affect a child's language and literacy understanding. At the start of schooling, these circumstances are noticed by the child's teacher. Studying and examining the relationship between home learning and the child's parental status is key to understanding a child's home life (Hartas, 2011).

Due to language barriers or lack of intercultural communication between teachers and families, many Hispanic families in the United States are often not as involved in their child's education at school and rarely get involved in the school activities (Cattanach, 2013). They may not understand what takes place at school, what assignments are due, or how to complete a project (Cattanach, 2013). Joanna Cattanach, author of "Support Parents to Improve Student Learning," believes that increasing parental involvement helps in developing a strong school culture. After-school programs designed for the parents will help assist these struggling parents with any language barriers. The program will improve test scores for the child, parent-teacher relationships, and the parents' involvement in their child's studies. The development of after school programs for Hispanic families brings families closer together. These programs will improve efforts and involvement of the families and the parents will invest their time into their child's education (Cattanach, 2013).

Hispanic families typically have specific rules and boundaries. As mentioned in the journal article "Support Parents to Improve Student Learning," Hispanic families focus on engaging in activities that build emotional maturity and key factors for student success. Some Hispanic families do not focus on assessing where their child can improve academically or how to prepare their child for the future because the definition of success may vary from culture to culture compared to those outlined in schools. Also, the lack of communication between educators and families can often hinder conversations related to academic success. It is essential

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that teachers have the knowledge about the various cultures in their classroom. They need to be understanding of certain situations that may arise in the classroom based on a student's cultural beliefs (Cattanach, 2013).

Some parents may feel overwhelmed at the start of the program. The majority of the families come from economically disadvantaged homes and they have never interacted with anyone outside of their culture. They may not feel as comfortable in the new setting, so it is essential to adjust to their comfort. According to Cattanach's research, Hispanic parents tend to feel most comfortable in small, group-based bilingual programs. Because of their lack of education, they feel alienated when they are addressed as a big group (Cattanach, 2013). Working closely with the parents will guide them on how to interact with their child. This arrangement will make parents feel content and will increase active participation (Cattanach, 2013).

Feeling comfortable in a school setting is important for a child to succeed in school. Besides focusing on the quality of engagement at home, it is essential for schools to incorporate Hispanic culture and other cultures and develop an understanding of their ways. Incorporating every culture makes the child feel comfortable in their classroom environment. As teachers, it is extremely imperative to incorporate cultural diversity into the classroom and lesson plans. Accommodating different cultures exposes the students to what diversity is and lets them see how each classmate comes from a different cultural background. Teachers need to take into account everyone's beliefs, customs, and family backgrounds. It is imperative for teachers to take the time to get to know their students and their families.

A teacher can be culturally responsive by introducing all the various cultures in their classrooms. Teachers can incorporate various works of literature that can introduce cultural

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diversity. Incorporating culturally diverse literature will help the students relate to situations that could happen in real life. Teachers could use this as a great starter activity for the parents and students to engage in together. They can relate to the characters in the story and ask questions about anything that may relate to their lives. Teachers can also plan a cultural diversity day, where all students can talk about their family background and beliefs. They can bring in a certain food their family makes, talk about their religion or even bring in something that relates to their culture. This is a great activity for the students to get to know their classmates and for teachers to get an understanding of where each student comes from. It will also make the parents feel involved in the child's progress. It is important during this day and age to really take time to learn about each student's backgrounds and families. It is important teachers introduce cultural diversity in their classroom and plan lessons in a culturally appropriate way.

Relationship building between teachers and families was an important issue John Sutterby(2007) found in his research article "Amistades: The Development of Relationships Between Preservice Teachers and Latino Families." He focused on what families bring to the educational process and the importance of language to communication and relationship building. He found through his research that powerful relationships could be developed between teachers and families if given the opportunity to engage with each other in dialogue. Establishing the after school-tutoring program encouraged interaction with the families. It provided the teachers with structured opportunities to interact and communicate with families. The prompts helped the teachers obtain information from the families about home activities and interests, as well as finding out what they wanted to acquire from the after school program (Sutterby, 2007).

Sutterby's findings confirmed that teacher practices and specific school programs are the main reasons for encouragement of family involvement at school and at home. Productive



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communication and efforts made by the school increase family involvement. The results from this study all refer back to Sutterby's main focus on the importance of communication and relationship building. With this information, teachers need to value and build upon the background knowledge and support that families provide their children. His article suggests how teachers need to take into consideration culturally different families, their attitudes toward education, and how families support their children's education. These factors help enhance family-teacher relationships (Sutterby, 2007).

Programs that allow parents and teachers to interact on a regular basis are important for effective communication and understanding of learning material. Giving the parents an opportunity to understand from teachers' specific learning strategies is important for them to acquire skills to help their child learn in a setting other than school. John Sutterby mentions how it is important that other schools and studies conduct research such as his own. These studies can look at the effect of similar programs and conversations between teachers and families of different backgrounds. The results will benefit many people interested in learning from after school programs on how to bring the literacy practices into their home settings (Sutterby, 2007).

Programs and techniques have been developed to address the differences between the home and school setting. Nancy Perry, (2008) intensely focused on a study that took place in an urban area in Arizona. This study focuses on the home literacy practices of low-income Hispanic families. The National Early Childhood Longitudinal Research Study explains how reading readiness scores of Hispanic preschool children in the United States is half a standard deviation below their white counterparts at the beginning of the kindergarten year. They enter school without the skills they need to become literate. As the school year progresses and they learn more literacy strategies, they tend to fall behind in work. They have difficulty in five measured

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components of reading readiness, which include letter recognition, beginning sounds, ending sounds, sight words and words in context. To improve these important learning factors, family literacy programs were designed to fill this achievement gap. The effectiveness of this after school program impacted the parental involvement and understanding of learning for the child (Perry, 2008).

The focus of this thesis is to observe and determine if after school literacy programs are effective in helping Hispanic families acquire language skills to assist their children in a home setting. These practices will impact language development that the Hispanic families can use while working with their child. Various methods of study and strategies can be done to increase the language of the students and parental involvement. Literacy activities will promote family connections and learning opportunities for the child. It is significant for parents to keep a journal that reflects on ways that encourage family bonding and improvement in the child's dual language proficiency. Studies, observations and research will show the effectiveness of how parental practices developed over a school year.

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### Chapter 2

Two of the main socio-economic measures, family income and lack of maternal educational qualifications, impact home learning. Home learning that involves parental support with homework includes reading, writing, and emergent literacy activities. The language barriers made it difficult for the parents to assist their children, which resulted in the children not completing assignments brought home from school. These implications have more effect on early childhood education, and because of this difficulty, Hispanic children are starting school with an insufficient amount of help from home (Hartas, 2011).

Research has shown that Hispanic families incorporate school-related literacy activities into their homes if they believe it would best help their child succeed academically. They modify the literacy activities to reflect their existing cultural beliefs and practices. These adaptations are made from the parent's best interests and beliefs. They are not incorporating specific strategies and activities. According to author Nancy Perry, a specific study was done to examine how Latino immigrant families incorporate school based interactive literacy activities into their home practices (Perry, 2008).

The Title I Even Start Family Literacy Program was used in the study that took place in an urban area in Arizona. The program promotes intergenerational literacy learning through adult and child education, parenting classes and facilitated parent and child literacy activities. Educators come to the program and instruct the parents on ways to interact and engage in literacy activities with the children. With the help and guidance from a trained educator, parents are given opportunities to practice these interactive literacy strategies with their children. Approaching the families at the preschool level prevents them from any additional language

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barriers and sets the bar for later school years. It helps increase the number and types of parent-child literacy experiences that occur in the home (Perry, 2008).

Integration of the school-based literacy practices into the home literacy practices is an imperative factor for understanding children's learning. Perry found that the Title I Even Start Family Literacy Program shows children experience more success in reading when the literacy practices in their home environment mirror those practiced in school. Children spend the majority of their day in school, where they are acquiring English and learning in the language that is not primarily spoken at home. Due to the language differences at home and in school, the child feels more comfortable practicing their literacy skills how they learned it in school. They learn and pick up strategies by the way the teacher models the activity. It is important to understand if and how Hispanic parents participating in these after school programs are integrating school literacy practices into their home activities. If they are not following the exact practices taught by the educators, the goal and main idea of the program will not be met. The goal of the Title 1 Even Start Literacy Program is to teach these families specific strategies that can be utilized in their home setting to help assist their children in acquiring specific literacy skills. It is essential parents are learning the literacy practices in the methods designed and instructed for them and integrating them into their home activities (Perry, 2008).

Some factors that prevent parents from integrating specific literacy practices are lack of understanding and cultural beliefs. Reading aloud is not a common practice in low-income Latino families. According to Perry, when reading aloud, parents tend to focus on teaching moral lessons rather than providing instruction on specific literacy skills. Latino parents provide their children with direct instruction, which is a factor discouraged by many educators. Educators believe that direct literacy instruction may lessen a child's motivation towards reading. These

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cultural factors contribute to the Hispanic children's low levels of reading readiness at the early educational grade level (Perry, 2008).

It is imperative to learn how Hispanic families assimilate these practices into their home literacy interactions. Learning how they teach their children will answer many questions teachers have on parental involvement on a child's education. The Title 1 Even Start Literacy Program strengthens family practices and models appropriate strategies they can acquire from current modeled practices. Parents, who participate in this program, may see an improvement on their child's test scores and the children will score higher on standardized literacy measures. It is essential they utilize the methods taught in the schools and uncover home practices with the teachers that they value for their child's education.

The study conducted in the article "Continuity and Change in Home Literacy Practices of Hispanic Families with Preschool Children," written by Nancy Perry, includes specific methods, and data and material that correlate to the main idea of my study. The intention of this study was to examine how Latino immigrant families incorporate school-based interactive literacy activities into their home literacy practices. The participants were thirteen families enrolled in a Title 1 program entitled *Even Start Family Literacy Program*. They partook in the study for three hours every morning, where they engaged in interactive activities. All the participants were from Spanish-speaking descent whose average education level was no more than ten years with twenty five percent having an eighth grade education or less. The children all ranged from ages 2-5 years old (Perry, 2008).

One educator who led the program had an early childhood license and the other was an adult education instructor. They have been a part of this program for five years and conducted instructional lessons every school day. Besides the formative instruction, the educators

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conducted home visits and documented parent-child literacy practices that occurred in the home setting. They recorded anecdotal records during each of the thirteen families' home visits. The notes consisted of the goals and objectives of the teachers, reflective observations of the families' engaging efforts and the practices being modeled. The parents focused on how to teach literacy concepts to their children while playing with materials provided by the program. The materials provided to each family gave the parents opportunities to practice playing games that involved reading and a variety of literacy practices. The educators instructed the parents to keep a written journal documenting the materials they used, what they learned from the activity and a reflection of what the parent and child learned. The journal entries were then analyzed and coded by specific researchers. The coding consisted of data related to the parent's use of literacy materials and their experiences. Researches thoroughly studied the material and their findings revealed that Hispanic parents modify school related literacy activities to reflect their cultural beliefs and practices. The practices the parents adapted into their homes consisted of direct instruction scaffolding strategies, engaging interactive literacy activities with children and the use of resources that create opportunities for bilingual literacy events to occur during school-designed interactive literacy activities (Perry, 2008).

The participants of this study utilized specific methods and approaches in incorporating home literacy activities into their daily living. Parents used prompting in playful and spontaneous ways that were demonstrated as a tool for guiding. They used no form of direct instruction or formative approaches while modeling to their children. In the Latino culture, direct approaches are perceived as a chore or punishment, which leaves a negative reading experience on the child. Parents used the models taught by the two educators and adapted literacy activities that incorporated traditional values from their homeland and literacy skills that would lead their child

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to success in their new country. With the use of metalinguistic strategies, parents supported their child's bilingualism by making associations between written and oral language that was being made clear to their child. They related new words to objects they found in their everyday lives, which help the children make connections between specific items. Parents also used specific strategies such as finger pointing to guide their oral reading in print. The children become used to the specific strategies their parents had them engaging in. Practicing their literacy skills became a daily routine for them to include in their learning (Perry, 2008).

Nancy Perry mentioned and utilized specific strategies in her research that could relate to this thesis statement. Recording anecdotal records during home visits, developing literacy games and documenting materials utilized were some specific strategies that she used in her research, which can be implemented and used in this thesis. She developed engaging interactive literacy activities, which focused on sound and letter recognition. These activities made learning fun for the parents and the activities were made feasible to be done in the home setting. Her study and work associates well to this thesis study.

The study examined specific ways Hispanic families include school-based interactive literacy activities into their home practices. The research showed the strategies utilized by the parents in this study showed a strong desire to support their child's literacy development. They stepped out of the comfort zone and looked over their cultural beliefs and practices. They tried new methods and approaches which were effective learning modalities that were utilized in both the home and school setting. This study showed the effectiveness of after school literacy programs on Hispanic families. This study is one of many that demonstrate the importance of Hispanic families engaging in after school literacy programs to acquire specific literacy activities and language skills.

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Another study that focused on parental involvement in children's education was a study done on rural minority parents in the southeast region of the United States. The study was comprised of 213 parents of third, fourth and fifth grade students. The sample consisted predominantly of African American, Mexican American and some Caucasian parents. The study showed a variety of educational backgrounds, parental involvement and socio-economic status of the families. The projected group was given a survey to complete filled with questions pertaining to practices done in the home setting with their child. It posed questions that ask specific literacy strategies, what methods the parents use with their child, how they utilize specific materials and incorporate it into their learning modalities. One particular question presented was, "To what extent do significant associations exist between family activities with children in the home that support school learning rural minority demographics?(Caudle, 2012)" The study disclosed detailed information on the educational status of the parents, the marital status and the relationship of other family members involved in the child's educational career (Caudle, 2012).

Drusilla Caudle, author of *Practices in the Homes of Rural Minority Parents that Support School Learning*, organized the data for the study examined in this journal. The study focused on specific practices in the homes of the minority parents. It observed how they help and support their child's learning and achievement in school. According to Caudle, the study showed that rural minority parents are very involved with their children's learning at home. They value education and want the best for their children. Various methods of learning were surveyed in this study including books and reading, discussion of grades and a discussion of how the children were doing in school. Out of everything surveyed, home activities were the most important to minority parents. The parents structured the home environment in a way that promotes learning in an indirect way. The families in the study stressed the importance of schools, creating parent



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involvement programs that help parents continue to support their children at home. The programs helped model specific strategies they were able to utilize in the home setting. It focused on specific methods that worked for all three of the target grade levels, and it taught each family member how to engage with the child and make learning literacy enjoyable (Caudle, 2012).

Caudle (2012) is not the only author who organized and examined specific studies done by families. Clarena Larrotta, author of *Literacy Benefits for Latino Parents Engaged in a Spanish Literacy Project*, focuses on the literacy benefits for Latino Parents that engaged in a Spanish literacy project. The study explains how the families knew very little English and they had a hard time understanding and helping their children before the study. With the program, the families acquired specific learning strategies that benefited their child's learning. The program focused on the implementation of literacy strategies and transitions and interactions that helped engage the parents in literacy activities. The program provided specific tools and opportunities to help parents develop their own literacy skills. This program shows positive effects of children's academic performance and school achievement (Larrotta, 2009).

Larrotta mentions how bilingual students are constantly developing new learning strategies to help them cope with the acquisition of two or more languages at a time. Parental involvement and interactions are essential to help aid in literacy success. Strategies such as shared reading provide an ample of opportunity for the child to learn language. It is an interactive experience and promotes the development of language skills which helps develop their oral language skills. The study provides opportunities for home language use and parent and child verbal participation (Larrotta, 2009).

This parent literacy project took place at a school every Monday for two hours for twelve weeks. It took place in Central Texas, in a public school with bilingual and English as a second

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language support. 90% of the school population consisted of Latino families. 32 mothers ranging from ages 30-50 participated in the study. Each week parents wrote reflections in Spanish, on what they did at home with their child. The participants would share their experiences and reflect on each other's practices. Once the reflections were presented, a facilitator would present the week's literacy activity in English. Handouts were provided to each parent, featuring the strategy of the week. The facilitator would model the strategy and then have the parents practice it with one another. At the end of the session, the parents would meet with their children to practice what they learned. The facilitator observed and guided the parents with the new strategy. The goal each week was to engage the parents in readings and to motivate them to practice a new strategy each week with their own child. The facilitator had to focus on assigning appropriate readings for the parents that would give them confidence to teach their child (Larrotta , 2009).

Multiple strategies and methods of teaching were developed in the after school practice. Strategies such as think alouds, K-W-L charts, concept mapping, preview-view-review and cubing were some of the many strategies taught. All these activities helped organize concepts, ideas and questions presented to the parents. They were used for both reading and writing and helped the parents explore topics presented. Each strategy worked in its own way and served as a tool that the parents were able to bring home (Larrotta, 2009).

Incorporating the strategies taught into their home practices helped engage the parents in their child's education. The findings of this study indicated that parent literacy engagement implies multiple interactions with the child and negotiation and dialogue between parent and child to develop oral language skills. The strategies taught helped enhance the child's literacy experience and made the parents reflect on which practices worked best. This practice helped all

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the parents, especially the ones with low literacy skills, benefit from engaging in literacy activities with their children. One key factor that was learned from this study was that in order for the child to learn, it is imperative for the parents to develop their own literacy skills first.

Connecting home and school literacy practices is essential for developing literacy proficiencies required for success in school. Mari Haneda, author of *Becoming Literate in a Second Language: Connecting Home, Community and School Literacy Practices*, provides research on diverse literacy practices of English language learners in the home setting that help develop classroom practices. She mentions the practices ELLs use outside of school and the wide range of literacy practices they have to engage in. To help develop the ELLs identities, it is essential to take into consideration the practices that develop in a non-school setting, the support from their families and their experiences in their personal lives. These factors may hinder a child's education and delay them in acquiring the English language, which is used in school. Strategies in the study increase literacy practices at home and in the community, and help students become critically literate.

Children of minority families develop literacy practices at home and in the community. They engage in multilingual literacy practices and receive support from their parents. Depending on the educational status of the child's parents, their older siblings sometimes need to be the ones who support their younger sibling's educational learning. In this particular study, Anton, a kindergartener, was taught by his fourth grade sister. Their mother worked every day and did not have the time to engage and help Anton with homework or practice literacy activities. His sister modeled school practice in content and structure and she developed lessons for him that would help him in school. Latino families tend to have an extended network of support with out-of-school literacy practices. To succeed in a classroom setting, it is imperative that children engage

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in any after school programs. These programs help them learn English and specific strategies that can be used at home. ELL children need to engage in a range of literacy practices at home and in the community. It enables these young learners to become literate and succeed in school (Haneda, 2006).

Besides using after school programs for learning English and literacy strategies, Latinos become diversified by engaging in the community and learning from personal experiences. They develop independence and interact with others both in and out of a school setting. The study mentions a boy named Jack, a low-achieving student who used his personal life to help him understand English. He attended ESL classes, where he learned basic reading and writing skills. The program did not benefit Jack and he did not succeed in a mainstreamed classroom. What worked for him was his personal web site, where he engaged in sustained conversations in English with others from around the world. He was able to develop an identity for himself and he did not feel discriminated against like he did during school. This engagement boosted his school literacy skills and helped him establish a part time landscaping business. Jack is a prime example of how different methods are used to promote and learn English. Every person has a different learning style and Jack needed this to step out of the class setting to acquire the specific skills he needed to succeed (Haneda, 2006).

It is important for schools to give students opportunities to engage in a wide variety of literacy practices. This helps the students with becoming literate. Haneda mentions how advocates of critical literacy emphasizes that learning to read and write is part of the process of becoming conscious of one's educational experience. Students need to explore their own identities and find what works best for them to learn. Actively engaging in multiple learning practices such as using technological devices, personal experiences and learning out of the

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school environment will help promote personal growth for the student. Parental involvement is not always an option for the students to rely on. They are either fortunate enough to receive help from other family members or receive aid from school personnel. Multiple factors impact language development for a child, which increases understanding of specific literacy practices (Haneda, 2006).

After analyzing the studies done on Hispanic families and reviewing the research from authors Cattanach, Caudle, Hartas, Perry, Larrotta and Haneda, I noticed a reoccurring pattern. Each researcher noticed specific qualities and traits to each family's culture and beliefs that may be affecting the child's learning. Qualities such as how the families teach reading and what strategies they use were all common in Hispanic families. The programs the families attended taught specific strategies that would impact language development and reading comprehension skills. Other resources were given to provide information that families can utilize and have easy accessibility to. Computer technology is a great way for parents to learn and interact with their child. They can watch videos to learn specific strategies that they can teach their child. Parents can also find educational websites that can be used for educational purposes.

Teaching students how to comprehend text can be a difficult task. For some children, learning and understanding reading comprehension comes easily, but others find it to be challenging. The video titled "Building Comprehension" mentions a variety of ways that can teach students specific comprehension skills. Making predictions is one way that can help in reading comprehension. It gives the students some ideas of what could happen in a story. They think of this idea on their own and while they are reading they are able to reflect back on what they predicted. As mentioned in the video, the predications help the children on what to expect next in the story. The video also mentions how inferences help with comprehending text by

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making the children aware of the characters. As teachers, we can help teach students how to make predications and inferences. This will help them connect with the story and understand how to complete and follow along with the assignment (Duke, 2011).

As Nell K. Duke mentions in the video “Building Comprehension,” reading comprehension is simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning from text. She explains how it is important that all learners focus on decoding and fluency because understanding those skills will help in reading comprehension. She mentions a variety of instructional practices that would maximize opportunities to strengthen comprehension. These strategies can also help ELLs acquire specific learning skills. One strategy mentioned was building vocabulary. This helps students understand all the words in the story and the ideas being presented. Context clues were another strategy presented. She explained how context clues are used around the world to understand the word presented. We use information we already know to understand detect what context clues are. Engaging the students in discussion can help develop these ideas. It is important ELLs know these strategy because it will help develop their English and understanding of our language (Duke, 2011).

All the studies examined showed the importance of after school literacy programs. It helped parents develop specific strategies that impact language development practices at home. With close observations, data records and materials, researchers provide evidence that promote the importance of programs for bilingual learners, under privileged families and single parent families. With the aid from experienced educators or instructors, the families who took part in the studies brought home activities that were engaging and helpful for the child’s learning development. The studies mentioned help influenced the practices and methods develop for this current study. Evidence provided will show the importance of how parent practices developed

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through an after school literacy program, and how they influence and impact language development practices at home.

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### Chapter 3

#### Methods Section

#### **Participants**

Recruitment of participants for the current study was done through an after school program at PS 20 that is working closely with Wagner College. The program was set up through a grant, given from Deutsche Bank back in September 2013. Various organizations worked through this grant including Wagner College, El Centro, Project Hospitality and Public School 20. The program took place after school Monday-Wednesday for three hours each night. The teachers and students involved in the program took a great deal of time to develop an appropriate curriculum that would benefit the parents and students learning process. The main focus of the program was to help families learn specific strategies that would help them assist their child with any of their educational needs. This study focuses specifically on the Wednesday sessions designed to model literacy practices to mothers and provide dyadic training through individualized and small/large group support by graduate students in the Early Childhood and Literacy Masters Programs at Wagner. Graduate students received ongoing supervision and support from two professors.

The participants for this study were seven out of thirteen mothers/caregivers that live in Port Richmond, Staten Island and their children who attend PS 20. All of the participants were of Mexican descent and spoke very little English. When the program was developed in September 2013, a majority of the mothers signed up immediately to participate. Five of the seven mothers/caregivers participating in this study attended the program for two consecutive semesters. The other mothers/caregivers that were new attendees, learned about how effective the program was from mothers/caregivers who were involved in the program. The



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mothers/caregivers explained how well their child had been improving and how they have learned to assist them with their educational studies.

### **Design**

A qualitative approach was utilized for this study. To gather materials and information on how effective the program was and how the mothers/caregivers were benefiting from it, an in person interview took place. Each mother/caregiver was interviewed with a series of eight questions. These questions were validated using experts in early childhood and literacy. The questions designed were constructed from an extensive literature review on the subject of the impact of after school literacy programs. The questions focused on how the mother/caregiver was benefiting from the program and what strategies they utilized and practiced at home. It also questioned their practices before the program and how they reflect on the practices learned with the other families.

After each mother/caregiver was interviewed, all seven interviews were analyzed. Questions were separated into specific categories and data was analyzed. The mothers'/caregivers' responses were separated into groups. Their answers from the interview were separated by what they did before and after the program. The results showed specific answers given by each mother/caregiver. Their responses also were separated by who was benefiting from the program and by what strategies they have implemented and utilized in their home setting.

### **Materials**

To recruit participants from the program to participate in the study, a letter was written in Spanish and English that described the study and how the parents would be involved. The letter explained in detail what the purpose of the study was and how the parents' answers would be

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utilized. It explained what was being measured and tested and reassured them that this was not harming them in anyway. No personal information would be revealed, but their answers would be recorded and analyzed based on responses given. Letter of recruitment can be found in Appendix C.

The interview questions were designed over a period of time. The eight questions developed focused on information that was needed to understand how the mothers/caregivers interact with their children. It asked each mother/caregiver questions prior to the program and after they got involved in the program. It had them specifically explain strategies they have learned to utilize and explain the benefits of getting involved in the program.

To assess the parents practices related to literacy learning, specific materials were utilized to test their understanding of what was being taught and learned from in the program. Surveys were created that asked a series of eight questions. The survey was created based on the program, the parents and strategies utilized.

## **Procedure**

Data was collected through an interview process from seven of the mothers that participated in the program. Due to the language barrier, a translator was used to help translate all the questions that were asked to each mother. Their responses all varied depending on the amount of days they came to the program. The interview and questions were asked at the church the program takes place in. Being that the mothers/caregivers were used to that setting, it was only appropriate to interview them in a setting they felt most comfortable. The interviews took place after school at 4PM for a week. Each day a different mother/caregiver was interviewed.

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Interviews took between 30-60 minutes depending on how much information the mother/caregiver had to offer.

Initially there were only a few families recruited to part take in the program. They were families whose children went to PS 20. The demographics of the members in the program were all families of Mexican descent. All of the families spoke Spanish and very little English with a variety of literacy skills. As the program developed, more families joined the literacy program. The current members in the program informed other families how their child was benefiting and how they were also learning how to help their child at home.

The subjects were selected depending on who participated in the Wednesday after school program. The questions were designed around the Wednesday evening sessions. Mothers/caregivers were also asked to express their opinions on the overall program. There were 7 mothers/caregivers that were interviewed and worked with during the course of this study. This study included multiple components. First, weekly observations were made at the after school program at PS 20. The participants were observed weekly and had individual conferences. The participants were required to complete feedback forms on a regular basis. These forms contained items that asked the participants to reflect on their practices and describe what has been working in their home setting. Finally, this study involved interviews and follow up sessions with each family. The first round took place in the middle of the study. The other will be a follow up months from now, to see if this program was effective and if the families are using the proper strategies at home. The participants were made aware of their free will to discontinue at anytime they please.

To protect the participant's confidentiality, a consent form was created to state the process of this study (Appendix C). The consent form was created in both Spanish and English,

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describing the entire study and what was expected from the families. Every family's identity was revealed or kept unidentified upon their request. Families were also aware of weekly observations that are being recorded. Nothing was written or discussed without their permission.

Parents were provided consent forms at the start of the program. Once they agreed and signed the consent form, observations were made weekly. Each week, notes were taken down based on the families' participation and understanding of the lesson taught. These observations went on for several months. During the middle of the program, interviews took place. The interview and data collecting process occurred over the span of one week. For three days, the families were interviewed and asked specific questions based on the study. Refer to Appendix A for questions asked.

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### Chapter 4

#### Findings/Results Section

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an after school program, specifically designed to model effective literacy practices for English language learners and their mothers/caregivers, had on practices utilized at home. Using a qualitative method, a series of eight questions related to the program were created in order to assess strategies and techniques utilized and reinforced at home. This chapter begins with information about the families, followed by an analysis of questions asked and a summary of overall results.

The program was designed to be culturally responsive, in which materials and facilitating of experiences incorporated Spanish language and traditions, to the mothers/caregivers and the children. All the families were of Mexican descent and ranged from various ages from 28-43 (see table 1). They spoke very little English and to help communicate with the mothers, a translator was used for assistance. The mothers/caregivers were eager to learn new strategies that would benefit them in assisting their child's language development.

The mothers/caregivers ranged from various ages. One mother/caregiver was in her forties, five mothers/caregivers were in their thirties and one in her twenties. Only two of the mothers/caregivers had more than one child enrolled in the program. Half of the mothers/caregivers have been a part of the program since it began in October 2013, the rest joined in January 2014. The backgrounds, age and sessions attended on the mothers/caregivers show no effect or relation to student progress. Table 1 provides an example of mothers' demographical information.

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Table 1. Mothers/Caregivers background and literacy experiences.

Mother/caregiver	Age of Mother/caregiver	Number of Children in Program	Number of sessions attended this program (fall and spring)
Mother/caregiver 1	43	1	2
Mother/caregiver 2	32	1	1
Mother/caregiver 3	29	1	1
Mother/caregiver 4	34	3	2
Mother/caregiver 5	39	3	2
Mother/caregiver 6	37	1	1
Mother/caregiver 7	31	1	1

Prior to the program, the mothers/caregivers were involved in a variety of programs and or training that they thought would benefit their child's learning process. These programs were specifically related to developing literacy and language skills and receiving assistance on assignments sent home from school. They attended sessions at the community's library, informational sessions given by the school and received tutoring and assistance from the organization El Centro. Mothers who attending tutoring sessions from El Centro went two to three times a week with their children. While attending these sessions, students received help with homework. The mothers/caregivers explained that the tutors would do the work with the children, but never explained thoroughly how to complete the assignments. The mothers/caregivers wished that the program taught them how to help their child. They felt like their students were not learning from El Centro, instead they were just figuring out how to complete assignments assigned from school.

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To assess mothers/caregivers understanding of material that has been taught, questions were developed to focus on the effectiveness of the program. The questions focused on specific strategies being utilized at home, activities the mothers engaged in with their child and most importantly if they had seen an improvement with their child's language development. For the first question, the mothers were asked "Are you practicing multiple strategies at home with your child? If so which strategies?" Several answers were received that included specific manipulatives, materials and strategies that were utilized.

After a careful review of the data, it is clear that since the program mothers are practicing strategies at home. Before the program, four of the mothers/caregivers never practiced anything at home with their child. The other three mothers/caregivers practiced simple activities with their children. None of the activities assisted the child in learning English or helped them with understanding material in both Spanish and English. The mothers/caregivers who attended the program for two terms began practicing strategies at with their child. They practiced finding sight words in books they read and focused on key vocabulary words found while reading. The new mothers/caregivers who joined in the second term, started learning from the mothers who were already in the program. The mothers/caregivers who already took part in the program provided insight on what was working at home with their children. Table 2 provides information about strategies utilized before the start of the program and after.

Table 2. Literacy strategies utilized at home before and after participating in the afterschool program

Mother/caregiver	Strategies practiced at home before program	Strategies practiced at home after program
Mother/caregiver 1	Reading books just in Spanish	Reading books in both Spanish and English. Vocabulary recognition
Mother/caregiver 2	Nothing	Cuts out words and glues them

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		in notebook. Practices reading and writing with them.
Mother/caregiver 3	Nothing	Crayons for counting manipulative's
Mother/caregiver 4	Reading	Sight words written on index cards
Mother/caregiver 5	Spanish Television shows for kids. Example: Dora the Explorer	Rice and beans used for counting manipulatives
Mother/caregiver 6	Games	How to identify key vocabulary words in books
Mother/caregiver 7	Nothing	How to use sight words learned

According to the data and answers given by the mothers, it is evident they have been using specific techniques from the program. Mother 2 stated “Since the program, every night me and my son read together. We like to read magazines and cut out words he knows. He learned that these words are called sight words. My son now has a collection of words, all alphabetized, in his notebook. I am so grateful that I can now work with my son and help his learning process.”

Many of these hands on materials and activities were modeled to the mothers by teachers in the program. The teachers created fun and engaging activities for the families. One lesson was an ELA and sports lesson. This lesson was an engaging lesson for the students and mothers/caregivers. The lesson was designed to accommodate many styles of learners including visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The teachers modeled for the students and their mother/caregiver what soccer is and what they would be learning. Once the topic was introduced, teacher's introduced key vocabulary words and matching pictures for the students to learn from. Each word had both the Spanish and English meaning and a clear picture to show what the definition meant. This helped the students with sound and letter recognition. Techniques were also modeled such as sky writing. The teachers showed the mothers/caregivers how to do this so they could practice other words at home with their child. All the



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mothers/caregivers seemed very intrigued by the lesson and participated by asking questions about the new vocabulary words and the story that was read.

Some mothers were also inspired to create their own activities that benefited their child's learning process. Mother 5 developed a strategy that involved using rice and beans. They used these items for counting manipulatives. They would count and use these items for math lessons. They also used the rice and beans as a reading strategy. Each time the child learned a new word, the mother would place a bean in a jar. At the end of each week the mother would count how many new words the child learned and log it in his notebook. This helped the mother self reflect on the work being accomplished between her and her son and to keep track of his current progress.

For questions that were related to self reflection, the mothers were asked if they were able to reflect on the practices with other families in the after school literacy program at PS 20. Every single mother responded yes to these questions. They explained that the majority of them speak with the families outside the program about what goes on. They discuss what is working at home with their child and they share ideas with one another. One mom informs other mothers to come try other programs that help them understand reading and writing techniques. They also mentioned how they discuss their children's progress and the improvements they see in their school work. Being able to reflect and discuss with other mothers about their child's learning process shows how effective the program is for these families. They discuss new strategies and what benefits their child's learning at home.

For questions related to language development, the mothers were asked if they have seen an improvement in their child's language development. They were asked to specifically describe how their child was improving. A majority of the moms answered yes to this question. They

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stated answers such as their reading levels improved, their child does homework on their own, and their child is more intrigued with reading. Mother 3 explained how much her son enjoys reading. She stated “Before the program my son never wanted to read. He never read at home or in school. Now my son attends the Breakfast Club at 7am every day at PS 20. He is always eager to read all different kinds of stories.” Mother 6 does not feel the same about the program. She stated “My son never participates during group work. The teachers are always teaching and he is always too shy to raise his hand.” Once receiving this information on mother 6 and her child, an effort was made by the teacher to help her son step out of his comfort zone. The teacher made sure to grasp the child’s attention and engage him with the task at hand. The mother of the child also received assistance with specific strategies she can work on at home with him.

Table 3. Improvement in child’s Language Development

Mother/caregiver	Yes or no	What was the improvement
Mother/caregiver 1	Yes	Child reads on her own more
Mother/caregiver 2	Yes	Her daughter never liked to read, now she loves reading
Mother/caregiver 3	Yes	Child is more interested in reading. He reads more in breakfast club at 7am
Mother/caregiver 4	Yes	Daughter can complete homework independently now
Mother/caregiver 5	Yes	Reading levels have improved for her son
Mother/caregiver 6	No	Her son still doesn’t participate in group discussions
Mother/caregiver 7	Yes	Reading levels have improved for her son

The fourth question posed to the mothers/caregivers had them describe the most beneficial outcomes from the program. Each mother described their experience and what they have learned from the program. They explained how they have learned a lot of techniques to help their child and improvements that could be done. Mother 1 explained how she appreciates the

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teachers providing one on one assistance to her child. She likes that her child can work well with a teacher and she believes this has built her child's confidence level. Mother 2 stated "Before the program my daughter never liked to read. She would get frustrated and never finish a book. Since the program my daughter enjoys reading and knows how important it is." Mother 3 noticed since the program her son enjoys reading independently. Mother 4 and 5 both stated that they appreciate the teachers assisting their children with their homework assignments. They both never understood how to complete their child's work or how to assist them. They are so grateful for learning new strategies to engage in with their child. Mother 6 has learned to help with her son's learning process. She feels like even with the program her son does not participate as much. Once this was learned, teachers focused on how to engage the child and assist the mom with his process. Mother 7 explained that she learned how to help her child in all subject areas. She learned the importance of reading strategies and how they can be utilized for all subject areas. The following chart explains the mothers/caregivers most beneficial outcome of the program

Table 4. Beneficial outcomes

Mother/caregiver	Beneficial outcome	Explanation
Mother/caregiver 1	Receiving one on one help	She appreciates the teachers providing one on one assistance to her child. Her child has gained so much confidence from this help
Mother/caregiver 2	Reading	Her daughter never liked to read until taking part in this program. She now knows how important reading is. She enjoys reading alone at home and during class discussions at school.
Mother/caregiver 3	Reading	Her son enjoys reading on his own now
Mother/caregiver 4	Receiving help with homework	She appreciated the teachers

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	assignments. Learning how to complete homework and how to help the child complete assignments.	assisting with the homework. She never understood the child's homework or how to help them. The teachers showed her many ways to assist her child and she is grateful for it.
Mother/caregiver 5	Receiving help with reading and homework	She always had difficulty reading along with her child. She appreciated the teachers helping her.
Mother/caregiver 6	Participates during group work only. Prior to the program her son never participated.	She feels her son only participates during group work, but when he is by himself he does not. The mom has learned to help with the sons learning process
Mother/caregiver 7	Mother learned how to help children with reading and understanding how to complete homework.	She expressed how much she appreciates that she learned how to help her child in all subject areas.

Prior to the program, the mothers were not familiar with multiple strategies they could engage in with their child. They were unaware of several resources they could utilize or programs that were available in their town and school. The mothers were asked the question "What educational activities did you engage in with your child before the program?" There were not many answers given by the mothers besides receiving tutoring services from El Centro. The lack of responses shows the significance of this program and how well it has been benefitting the families and child's educational progress.

As a continuation of finding out information about the families prior to participating in this program, each family was asked if they ever attended any informational sessions or meetings that help parents teach their children. A variety of answers were given and half the mothers said yes and the rest of them said no. Table 4 provides information about informational sessions attended.

Table 4. Information sessions before after school program

Mother/caregiver	Yes or No	Where the informational session
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		took place
Mother/caregiver 1	Yes	At the school, library and parent magazines
Mother/caregiver 2	No	Never knew about them
Mother/caregiver 3	No	Nothing available at the school.
Mother/caregiver 4	Yes	Library, meetings at school and progress reports
Mother/caregiver 5	Yes	Parent teacher meetings, library programs and teacher meetings
Mother/caregiver 6	Yes	PTA meetings, Parent teacher meetings and parent teacher conferences. The parent coordinator was also helpful with giving out resources
Mother/caregiver 7	No	No because the sessions were all given in English with no Spanish translation

Lastly, to see the effectiveness of the program, the mothers were asked if they were able to connect with the teachers. This question was asked to see how well the parents have been engaging with the teachers and if they were incorporating the strategies they have been modeling for them into their home setting. All the mothers connected with the teachers, whether it was during one on one or group work. Mothers/caregivers provided information on what helped them connect. Half of the mothers/caregivers believed group work helped their learning process. The other half of the mothers/caregivers felt they learned better when they worked individually with a teacher.

Each teacher took the time to get to know the mothers and assisted them in whatever they needed. The teachers each week planned lessons for the mothers to learn specific strategies that would help their child in a home setting. The language barrier was an issue for some of the mothers/caregivers. Hearing the lessons in English became difficult at times for them. They needed assistance from their child to understand each teacher's lesson. Even though this was a

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barrier for them, it gave the students and parents an opportunity to bond over the lesson. The students explained to their mother/caregiver what was being taught and the parents learned how to deliver that instruction.

As part of the lessons planned, the mothers and children utilized specific materials. These materials were provided or created by the teachers from Wagner College. Every week, a new lesson was created and new materials were introduced to the mothers/caregivers and children. The mothers were asked, “What materials utilized did you find helpful for you and your child that were used for academic purposes?” Mother 3 explained that she learned that she could use crayons and art supplies for learning. She stated “I know how to be creative with my kids now. We make projects at home together. This helps my child learn and understand what is being taught.” Table 5 provides specific details and responses given by the mothers involving what they learned during the intervention.

Table 5. Materials Utilized before during and after intervention

Mother/caregiver	Strategies/ skills practiced at home before intervention	Learned during intervention
Mother/caregiver 1	Reading books just in Spanish	That libraries always have books available as resource
Mother/caregiver 2	Nothing	Worksheets for all subject purposes
Mother/caregiver 3	Nothing	Crayons and art supplies to help understand learning in a creative way
Mother/caregiver 4	Nothing	Worksheets on information on how to understand reading/answering questions
Mother/caregiver 5	Spanish Television shows for kids. Example: Dora the Explorer	Crafts to engage the students on specific subject/ topic of interest being taught
Mother/caregiver 6	Games	Reading strategies
Mother/caregiver 7	Nothing	Games that were used to interact academically with child

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Although this study mainly examined the families, there were several variables of interest. These areas of interest included the self-reflective process, if any life experiences were helpful in this program, what the families are lacking, what has not been helpful, their most positive and challenging experience and what strategies work best at home. A main focus during this process was whether there was a growth in both native and English oral language. Seeing an increase in parental knowledge about early language and literacy development was the most beneficial factor. It showed that the assessment process was effective and the parents were learning from the program.

While collecting the data, a lot of useful information was learned about how the parents viewed the program. The data helped distinguish their intake and understanding on the questions asked from the surveys. With the help of Desiree, the translator, it was feasible to collect data and analyze the meaning of it all. Each family responded with an answer that reflected on their time during the program.

The findings and results of this study presented recurring themes and common variances that were described from all the parents. There were times when some parents gave answers that were different than others. These answers given were based on their time and experience throughout the program. The findings and results will help distinguish the effectiveness of the program. It helped to determine any implications and limitations.

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### Chapter 5

#### Discussion/Implications

The final chapter of this thesis will provide a brief overview of the study, including the thesis statement, major techniques and strategies involved and problems that may have arose during the findings process. The goal of this thesis was to find out how Hispanic parent practices developed through an after school literacy program. Questions that were asked to the parents included: “Are you practicing multiple strategies at home with your child? If so which strategies?, Are you able to reflect on these practices with other families in the after school literacy program at PS 20?, Have you seen improvement in your child’s language development/ If so, in which ways is he/she improving?, What has been the most beneficial outcome from this program?, Before this program, what educational activities did you engage in with your child?, Before this program, did you ever attend any informational sessions or other meetings that help teach their children?, Did you connect with any of the teachers? What materials utilized did you find helpful for you and your child that were used for academic purposes?” After learning exactly what the parents were doing with their child/children at home, the results showed the practices completed and how it did or did not impact language development practices at home. This section will discuss and expand on the results section and explain a deeper meaning and understanding of strategies learned and preformed by the families.

The overall purpose of this study was to identify if an after school literacy program can contribute and help Hispanic parents with limited English skills learn strategies that will benefit their child’s language development. In this manner, the study focused on multiple strategies being practiced at home with the child, working to improve the child’s language development, what the most beneficial outcomes from the program were, what materials were beneficial for



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the learning process and the before and after affects of the program. The assumption of this study was that the after school literacy programs would assist the parents and provide them with key strategies to increase their child's language development.

Programs that allow parents and teachers to interact on a regular basis are important for effective communication and understanding of learning material. Giving the parents an opportunity to learn from teachers, specific learning strategies, is important for them to learn exact ways on helping their child learn in a setting other than school. As mentioned by Larrotta (2009) parental involvement and interactions are essential to help aid in literacy success. The author suggested how multiple strategies that can be developed and utilized in after school programs to help organize concepts, ideas and questions presented to the parents and were utilized in this thesis study. The need for educators to practice culturally responsive teaching also appeared to be a major factor on the success of teachers' and mothers' interactions since mothers felt they served as role models and helped them learn ways to practice strategies at home with their child. Even without speaking the language they connected through intercultural exchanges based on the mothers/caregivers willingness to engage in educational activities that were designed to benefit their child's greatness needs.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Recruitment of participants for the current study was done through an after school program at PS 20 that is working closely with Wagner College. The program was set up through a grant, given from Deutsche Bank back in September 2013. Various organizations worked through this grant including Wagner College, El Centro, Project Hospitality and Public School 20. The program took place after school Monday-Wednesday for three hours each night. The

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teachers and students involved in the program took a lot of time to develop an appropriate curriculum that would benefit the parents and students learning process. The main focus of the program was to help families learn specific strategies that would help them assist their child with any of their educational needs.

This study only focused on the practices taught by the teachers of Wagner College between the mothers/caregivers and the children. As the results section showed, there were seven mothers involved with the study. Each mother was asked to explain how they engaged with their child academically prior to the program. Out of the seven mothers who part took in the study; four of them stated that they did not practice any strategies with their child before the program. The other three mothers who did practice strategies at home, engaged in basic activities that assisted their child's learning. None of the strategies and practices utilized included any techniques that the children learned from their teachers in school or that would help promote their reading and oral language skills.

The impact of teacher readiness also appeared to play a role in the response of families. Each week, the teachers of Wagner College came prepared with lessons to teach the mothers/caregivers and children. The teachers modeled during these lessons, activities and strategies the mothers/caregivers could do at home with their children/child. The teachers would point out key vocabulary words, sight words and reading techniques during each lesson. Each week there was a specific focus the teachers geared their lessons toward learning. During these lessons the parents learned how to interact with their child and promote their learning and understanding. The goal of the lessons was to increase their oral language skills, reading and writing techniques. The strategies were feasible for the parents to learn and teach their children. This encouraged and increased the interaction between the mother/caregiver and child.

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The teachers of Wagner College were very organized and thoroughly took the time to plan each week's lesson. Each teacher brought appropriate materials and developed lesson plans that accommodated the needs of each learner. The teachers also took time to interact with the mother/caregiver and provided them with activities and opportunities for them to interact with their child. At the end of each lesson, the teachers and families would reflect on the day's lesson. During this time the teachers were able to see if the mothers/caregivers understood the lessons taught.

The grant given to Wagner was a combined grant that included three other organizations. These other organizations included El Centro, Project Hospitality and several employees from Public School 20. From Monday through Wednesday a different organization worked with the families at PS 20 each night. While the seven mothers/caregivers were being interviewed, they expressed how they felt overwhelmed learning from four different groups of teachers. Some of the mothers found this frustrating learning from multiple instructors, which caused them to leave the program. The mothers felt that learning from four sets of groups was confusing. They preferred when the teachers from Wagner came on Wednesdays because they found them to be the most organized and professionally trained. The mothers stated in their interviews that they enjoyed learning the new strategies from the Wagner teachers. The lessons taught were beneficial and brought them closer to working with and assisting their child.

## **Discussion/Future Research**

Prior to joining this program, parents relied on tutoring to benefit their child's learning. They did not know how to engage with their child or use educational activities at home with them. Midway through the program, the mothers were asked what the most beneficial outcome

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from joining the program was. Each mother stated various answers such as reading activities, receiving one on one help, assistance from the teachers with homework and learning how to assist their child with their homework. The teachers modeled to the parent's ways they can help their child at home. They also provided them with strategies, including games, storybooks, and songs that they can use when helping their child. The parents loved when the teachers created fun and interactive activities to assist with the learning.

For one of the lessons, the teachers used puppets to help model the topic being taught. The children loved this lesson and the parents learned that they can use various objects to help teach a specific topic. Learning basic strategies like this were eye openers for the mothers/caregivers. They never realized they could use basic objects around them to assist their child's learning. The mothers started using objects in their own house to assist with the learning process. Mother 2 used crayons for counting manipulatives during math lessons. She also started using magazines to help with sight word recognition. Each time her child noticed a word he knew; they would cut it out and glue it in his notebook. Mother number 3 used rice and beans as her tool for counting. They practiced addition and subtraction strategies with these objects. Mother 5 has several children in the program, all in different grades. She stated that her youngest son has improved tremendously from the program. He is the only boy in his grade that knows how to read on his own. She takes the time to practice multiple strategies with all her children to improve their reading and writing.

The most important question that was asked to the mothers was if they have seen improvement in their child's language development. Out of seven mothers, six of them believe that they have seen their child improve greatly. They expressed how their children enjoy reading independently, how they can do homework independently, and how the reading levels of their

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child have improved. Mother 7 explained that her child jumped reading levels in school. She reads on her own, during breakfast club hours and she reads out loud for her parents at home. She has shown great progress and feels that is because of the program and teachers from Wagner.

For the one mother who believed their son did not improve, she explained that her son never participates in group discussions and he tends to be on the shy side. After interviewing this mom, she received additional assistance to increase her son's participation. Teachers focused on engaging the child and his mom more during group instruction. They focused on his oral language development and his interaction with his other classmates.

After gathering the data, it is evident that the program has benefited the mothers/caregivers and their children in multiple ways. It has provided them with a stepping stone on how to develop educational strategies to work at home with their child. Each strategy was designed for each age group of children involved in the program. Accommodations were made for each learner and activities were planned accordingly.

Relating back to what author Nancy Perry's study on the Title 1 Even Start Family Literacy Program in Arizona, incorporating school based interactive literacy activities into home practices will increase language development for children. Perry found that the Title 1 Even Start Family Literacy Program shows children experience more success in reading when the literacy practices in their home environment mirror those practiced in school. This is exactly what was done in the study done by teachers at Wagner College. They taught families literacy practices that they would be able to bring home and complete with their child (Perry, 2008).

Nancy Perry's study successfully taught parents how to adapt practices from a school based literacy program into their home setting. The mothers/caregivers at Port Richmond learned

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how to do the same with their children. The goal was for them to learn specific strategies that can be utilized in their home setting to help assist their child in acquiring specific literacy skills. Both studies correlate to one another and show the effectiveness of after school literacy programs. They show the success of the children and how the parents learn to adapt strategies into their homes.

This current study measured how effectively the parents learned and benefited from the after school program and how it impacted the language development of their child. It was not measuring the actual content the teachers were addressing. The study considered both before and after strategies the parents engaged in with their child. Various items were created to measure the progress of the mothers/caregivers. The study relied entirely on if the parents understood the materials presented and if the educational progress of their child/children improved.

A variety of interesting questions can be addressed and focused on as an ongoing process now that the study has been completed. The mothers/caregivers can interact with one another and discuss strategies that have been taught. They can utilize programs in the community, such as the city library, programs provided by their school PS 20 and they can continue part taking in the program provided by the Deutsche Bank. As the program continues, mothers/caregivers can now partake more in weekly lessons and group discussions. They can talk about what they have learned and express what else they want to learn about. The mothers/caregivers have been given an opportunity to learn strategies that can impact their child's language developed. These resources have paved a way for them to interact and assist more in their child's learning process. This program has been effective and benefited the lives of many. It has made learning fun, enjoyable and interactive between mother/caregiver and child.

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**Appendix A****Interview Questions:**

1. Are you practicing multiple strategies at home with your child? If so which strategies?
  
2. Are you able to reflect on these practices with other families in the after school literacy program at PS 20?
  
3. Have you seen improvement in your child's language development? If so, in which ways is he/she improving?
  
4. What has been the most beneficial outcome from this program?
  
5. Before this program, what educational activities did you engage in with your child?
  
6. Before this program, did you ever attend any informational sessions or other meetings that help parents teach their children?





**Appendix B**

**Questionnaire**

Please complete the following statements:

“ What did you learn today that you think you might use with your child at home?”

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“Talk with your child about...”

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## Appendix C

### Informed Consent Form

As part of my master's degree requirements at Wagner College, I am conducting research on the effectiveness of after school programs for parents to help their child learn reading strategies. You are invited to participate in this research project, and this document will provide you with information that will help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary.

For this study, I will be using an "action research" model, where participants are co-learners with me around an issue of practice. During the course of this project, I would ask you to allow me to interview you and observe you during the intervention sessions with the families in the program. I would also ask you to complete a brief feedback form at the end of each session. I will be asking what you have been learning during the course of this program and what effective strategies have been working for you at home. Finally, if you were to participate, you would be asked to take part in interview sessions during the course of this program. You will also be interviewed months after the program ends as a follow up session. All information you provide during the project will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. My final thesis will also be cleared of any possible identifying information in order to ensure your confidentiality.

This project does not carry any foreseeable risks. If for any reason you felt uncomfortable, you could leave the study at any time, with no penalty, and any information you may have provided will be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning this study please feel free to contact me at [christine.gomez@Wagner.edu](mailto:christine.gomez@Wagner.edu), or Dr. DeMoss at [Karen.DeMossA@wagner.edu](mailto:Karen.DeMossA@wagner.edu). Thank you for considering being part of a study related to my research for a master's degree in Education at Wagner College.

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*Please sign below to indicate your understanding of the project and your consent to participate. I have provided two copies so that you may keep one for your records.*

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

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Christine Gomez, Investigator

## How Hispanic Parent Practices Developed

### **Forma de consentimiento informado:**

Como la parte de mis requisitos del título de máster en el Colegio de Wagner, conduzco la investigación en la eficacia de después de programas escolares para padres para ayudar a su niño a aprender estrategias de lectura. Se invita a participar en este proyecto de investigación, y este documento le proveerá de la información que le ayudará a decidir si desea participar. Su participación se solicita, aún estrictamente voluntaria.

Para este estudio, usaré un modelo "de investigación", donde los participantes son co-principiantes conmigo alrededor de una cuestión de práctica. Durante el curso de este proyecto, pediría que usted permita que yo le entreviste y le vigile durante las sesiones de intervención con las familias en el programa. También pediría que usted complete una breve forma de la reacción al final de cada sesión. Preguntaré lo que ha estado aprendiendo durante el curso de este programa y que estrategias eficaces han estado trabajando para usted en casa. Finalmente, si debiera participar, le pedirían participar en sesiones de entrevista durante el curso de este programa. También serán meses entrevistados después de los finales del programa como seguir la sesión. Toda la información que proporciona durante el proyecto permanecerá confidencial y no tendrá que ver con su nombre. Mi tesis final también se limpiará de cualquier información de identificación posible a fin de asegurar su confidencialidad.

Este proyecto no lleva ningún riesgo previsible. Si por algún motivo se sintiera incómodo, podría dejar el estudio en cualquier momento, sin la pena, y cualquier información que pueda haber proporcionado se destruirá.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en [christine.gomez@Wagner.edu](mailto:christine.gomez@Wagner.edu) o el Dr. DeMoss en [Karen.DeMossA@wagner.edu](mailto:Karen.DeMossA@wagner.edu). Gracias por considerar ser la parte de un estudio estuvo relacionado con mi investigación para un título de máster en la Educación en el Colegio de Wagner.

Regístrese a continuación para indicar su comprensión del proyecto y su consentimiento a participar. ME han enviado dos copias, con lo que se puede mantener uno de sus registros.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Gomez, Investigator

# Wagner College

## Graduate Thesis Copyright Release Form

Student Name: Christine Gomez

Thesis Title: How Hispanic Parent Practices Developed Through an After School Literacy Program Impact Language Development Practices At Home

Department: Education

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Signed Christine Gomez Date 5-16-14