

Parent Engagement: Impacts, Influences, and Resources

by

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BEd University of Victoria (Elementary Curriculum), 2016

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This project focuses on the impacts and factors that influence parent engagement in a student's education. There were three guiding questions for this project: (1) What are the impacts of parental involvement on student achievement? (2) What are the factors that determine parent engagement in a child's education? (3) How do different modes of communication impact parent engagement? These questions are explored using current research and literature in the area of parent engagement. Chapter Three includes resources that educators can use to promote parent engagement in their classrooms and provide opportunities to create positive and meaningful relationships with parents and students in their learning communities. Understanding parent engagement in regard to a child's education is very complex and varied. However, if educators enlighten themselves to the underlying benefits, they can take steps to increase parent involvement in their own classroom and create positive change.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Personal Framework	1
Addressing the Problem	3
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	7
The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement	7
Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence and Types of Parental Involvement	7
Parental Expectations	10
Relationships and Non-Academic Measures	11
Negative Impacts of Parental Involvement	14
Significance of Findings	15
Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parent Involvement	16
Overview of Levels from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model.	18
Level 1.	18
Level 1.5.	19
Level 2.	20
Level 3.	20
Level 4.	21
Level 5.	21
Influences of Level 1 of Parent Engagement	22
Personal Motivators.	22
Contextual Motivators (Perceptions of Invitation).	23
Life Context.	25
Select Life Context Factors That Influence Parent Engagement	27
Time.	27
Relationship Status.....	27
Socio-Economic Status.	28
How Teachers Can Address These Barriers	29

Modes of Communication.....	30
Increasing Parental Involvement.....	32
Media Richness Theory	33
Mediums of Communication	35
E-portfolios.	36
Phone Messaging and Smartphones.....	38
Email.	39
Social Media.	41
Further Research	42
Chapter Three: Parent Engagement Resources	44
Chapter Four: Conclusion	46
References.....	47

List of Figures

Figure 1. Epstein Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence	8
Figure 2. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler of Parent Involvement	17
Figure 3. Level 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	18
Figure 4. Level 1.5 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	19
Figure 5. Level 2 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	20
Figure 6. Level 3 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	20
Figure 7. Level 4 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	21
Figure 8. Level 5 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process	21

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Chapter One: Introduction

Personal Framework

I am a beginning teacher in the early stages of my career. As an educator my life is far from dull, with most days filled with challenges, quandaries, provocations, and therefore endless new learning opportunities. There are unpredictable situations that arise on a regular basis that have no rigid structure or predictable outcomes. I feel I have been given guidelines to follow but mostly there are no quick solutions to help resolve these arising issues. In these circumstances I must become my own designer, navigator, and test pilot. Many times, as an educator, there are situations where there is no clear path, and the sense of imposter syndrome can be overwhelming. Especially as a younger teacher, one can feel like it is difficult to assert oneself with the students as well as the parents. It takes years to get your in-class routines fine-tuned and, all the while, being dynamic and addressing the needs of each class of students you receive. Additionally, this means tactfully navigating nuances with parents while creating a relationship that benefits both the parents and students.

An issue that I have dealt with since day one of teaching is how to approach parents when it comes to communicating and involving them in educating their child. This includes updating the parents on what is happening in the classroom, outlining the expectations of what the role of the parents is at home, and addressing any issues that arise in the school environment. How do I foster a sense of trust while fulfilling my professional responsibility? What is a manageable amount of communication for both the parents and teacher to create a balance that is maintainable? Through researching this

project, I have found that the test of successful communication is when there is meaningful and open dialogue that actually promotes celebrations and solutions instead of merely reporting challenging behaviour. Successful communication with parents also enables parents to become more actively involved in their child's education and promotes a sense of responsibility to address academic and social issues more openly.

I have seen a growing trend at school of parents becoming disengaged from being an active participant in their child's education. The reason behind this is complex and can range from not being informed by the teachers to not understanding the role they should undertake in their child's education. Just like many things in life, there is no guidebook that provides clear instructions on what to do. Unfortunately, the students suffer in this situation. Many do not receive adequate support, or the encouragement needed to promote positive growth. There is no generic household model. All families are unique and have their own dynamics which sometimes do not allow for active support of the student. We as educators have to recognize this uniqueness and therefore have to try to provide support in any way we can.

On the other hand, I have also personally seen the benefits for students who have actively involved parents who act as a type of co-pilot with their child as they go through their education. This usually leads to a better student and parent relationship. This model allows for a parent to understand what is happening in that student's life academically, emotionally, and socially. It usually leads to parents having a better grasp on the student's challenges and assists them in moving forward. Empowering parents is invaluable in the whole notion of parent engagement.

For many educators, actively pursuing parents to be a more involved entity in a student's education can be a tricky and potentially onerous task. Educators have to address a wide range of family dynamics and situations, while promoting open communication between all parties involved. How do educators create an environment to entice and retain parent involvement, while also maintaining reasonable and attainable expectations for parent involvement? The goal is to promote inclusion of different family situations and not create additional conflict at home by implementing homework regimes that foster contempt on the part of the parents or students. The question that resonates is how can a teacher design a classroom program that endorses parent, student, and teacher involvement that encourages open communication and therefore ultimately benefit the students?

Addressing the Problem

The focus of this paper is parent engagement in K-12 schools. Parent engagement is linked to many positive outcomes that can lead to higher levels of student success (Epstein, 1992, 1996; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2016; Wilder, 2014; Wong et al., 2018). Parent involvement also plays a large role in promoting positive attributes for students such as, increased self-esteem and regulation, improved relationships between teachers and students as well as parents, and constructs positive expectations for students (Castro et al., 2015; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oswald et al., 2018; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; Wilder, 2014). However, the level of engagement is not consistent for all children, and factors such as parental-efficacy, family culture, parental time and energy. How schools interact with families can impact how families are involved with their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997;

Murray et al., 2014; Turner-Vorbeck & Sheldon, 2019; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). The purpose is to determine what strategies can be used to support parent engagement in positive ways and provide information on best practices. The first step may lie to both encourage and facilitate a mindset shift for parents to fully embrace the importance of family engagement.

Although parents often want to help their children with school, they do not always possess the time and resources to accomplish these goals. How can we, as educators bridge this gap and lessen the burdens that traditionally hinder parent involvement? How can we more effectively communicate with parents about the needs of the student to lead to more opportunities for parents, teachers, and students to work together?

An investigation of the impact that parental involvement has on a student's success can illuminate how different types of approaches, and the implementation thereof, create more effective relationships between teachers, parents and students. To answer this question, the wider parameters of what impact parent engagement has on students' academic outcomes must be investigated. When reviewing the literature on parental involvement in a child's education, Joyce Epstein's, *Spheres of Influence and Types of Parental Involvement* describes the importance of a team approach between the teacher, parent, and student in creating a constructive and positive relationship to promote success for the student (Epstein, 2010). In the chapter two, this framework will be explored in more detail and the importance of parental involvement in student academic success will be investigated.

In creating an environment that creates a team mentality, educators have to attempt to understand the issues that hinder parent participation in their child's education.

Additionally, we cannot assume that parents have the knowledge and the resources available to feel confident about helping their child with their education. Educators have to consider what the parents experienced in school and how that has altered their viewpoint of what schools are expected to provide in a modern-day context. By doing this, educators can address the preconceived notions of what parents believe is expected of them, and more importantly, we can help define the role that parents can play in their child's education. The *Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parent Involvement* provides a framework to understand that family engagement is based on the parent's decision to become involved in the student's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). This model also helps educators understand how different factors can impact how parents are engaged and what educators can do to tip the scales, to encourage parents to play a more active part in a student's education. This is a complex and dynamic issue that will be explored further in chapter two.

Once we are able to identify the underlying factors that impact parent involvement, educators can explore different strategies to increase communication with parents and in so doing, can create a more cooperative team-like relationship. The final section of chapter two explores how technology can play a large role in encouraging parents to be an active participant in the student's education by increasing communication. More specifically, this section looks at the different modes of communication available to a teacher and how each type of communication has its benefits and downfalls. Using Media Richness Theory, various communication mediums are explored to see their effectiveness in relaying information to parents (Daft & Lengel, 1986). The different modes of communication allow for educators to assess the pros and

cons of each medium and how they can address barriers that parents face and encourage flexibility and convenience, while promoting communication. Furthermore, these different modes of communication provide the ability to increase the efficiency and quantity of communication between parents and teachers, while allowing for the possibility of collaboration on a wide range of issues, from celebrating the success of a student to brainstorming a solution to help a student academically or emotionally.

The road to getting parents actively and effectively involved in their child's education is very daunting. If we look at parent engagement as a series of smaller steps, we can start to understand and evaluate what needs to be done to become better educators and to create an environment that promotes open, dynamic, and efficient dialogue with parents that ultimately can support the students.

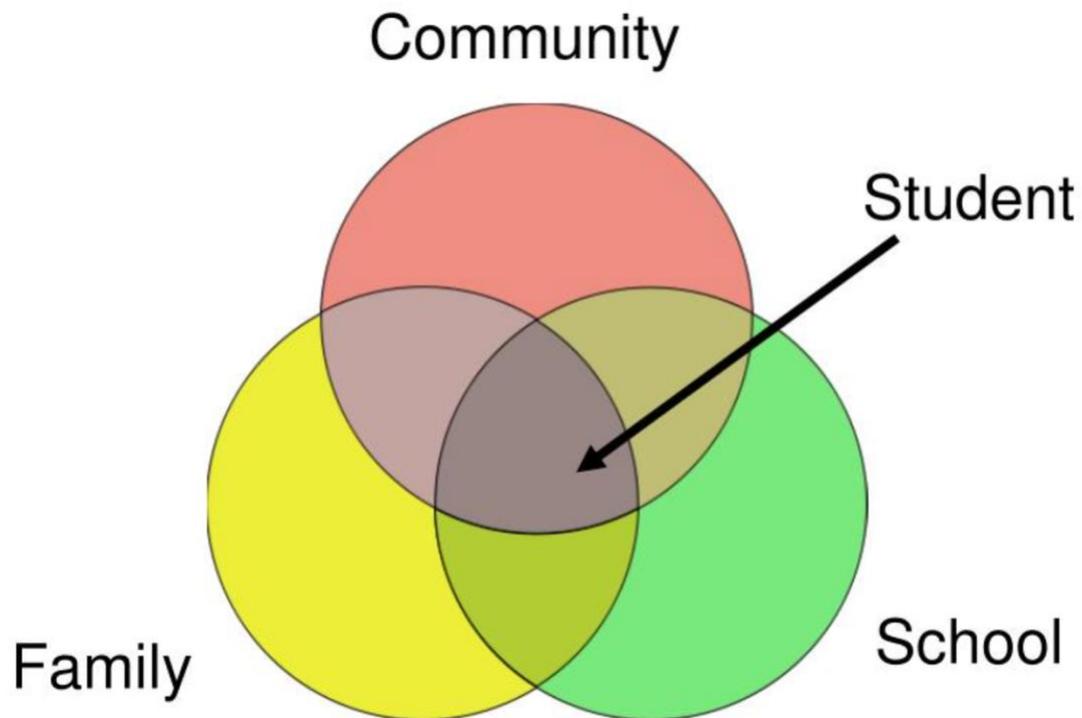
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement

There is significant research and critical literature on the crucial role of parents in education and the impacts thereof; however, the question of best practices yields many different perspectives and positions. Several leading researchers in the field have found that this is a complicated and multifaceted inquiry. However, the overarching consensus is the importance of constant communication between teachers and parents, as well as the importance of providing resources that can aid parents in nurturing and enriching a child's education at home. Many sources also indicate that parental involvement is an essential variable in a child's development and especially impactful on their academic success (Epstein, 1992; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2016; Wilder, 2014; Wong et al., 2018).

Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence and Types of Parental Involvement

While different pedagogical frameworks outline the importance of parental involvement, many researchers now agree that Joyce Epstein is a leader in this field. Her framework is widely used to best demonstrate the importance of parental involvement in a child's education. Epstein's *Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence* highlights the importance of a team approach, arguing that student success is not merely impacted by parent involvement; rather, a partnership between the parents, school, and community is essential for successful education (Epstein, 2010b).

Figure 1*Epstein Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence*

Epstein, J. L. (2010). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. [Conceptual model]

Epstein's claim is illustrated in Figure 1.0 (above), which positions the student at the centre of the nexus between the school, community, and parents. The student is the recipient of the actions and contributions of the other spheres. Likewise, the separate spheres are not isolated; rather, they are already connected by the student and thus stand to benefit from each other. When families and schools are collaborating as partners, parents have the opportunity to feel empowered to advocate for their children and academic achievement among children can increase. Epstein argues, that this interactive

and symbiotic relationship can lead to benefit all parties if they utilize each other successfully (Epstein, 2010).

Although the school and community play vital roles in creating an ideal environment for a student's success, the focus for this paper is on the role that parent involvement can have on students' achievement. Focusing on the parent role of the relationship, Epstein highlights that there are six different ways to create a successful partnership between the family, community, and school. Types of Parental Involvement. According to Epstein (2010), the six types of parental involvement are:

- 1) *Parenting* - Help families create a learning environment to support children as students.
- 2) *Communication* - Develop effective forms of communication between school and home about school programs and the student's progress.
- 3) *Volunteering*- Allow parents to help and be involved in school programs and functions.
- 4) *Learning at home* - Provide information and ideas on how parents can help and support their children with their schooling.
- 5) *Decision making* - Include parents in school and class decisions.
- 6) *Collaborating with the community* - Identify and utilize resources from the community to strengthen school programs and student learning.

These types of involvement all play an essential role in creating an optimum setting for a student's achievement. According to Epstein (1992), it is essential that all six types of involvement are integrated to yield the most positive results and, yet, despite

Epstein's claim, there is more recent evidence that specific types of involvement play greater, more impactful roles towards student achievement.

Parental Expectations

According to recent research, parental expectations and aspirations for a child have the strongest correlation with student achievement compared to all the other forms of parental behavioural involvement (Boonk et al., 2018; Wilder, 2014). That being said, parent expectations and parent physical involvement in the school fundamentally complement each other and should be combined. There is a strong correlation between parents who are more involved in their child's education and parents that demonstrate that they have higher expectations for their children (Castro et al., 2015; Wilder, 2014). It is hypothesized that this correlation is due to the fact that the level of parental expectations directly reflects the parent's own beliefs, attitudes, and values towards education and school. Accordingly, when parents are actively involved in their child's education, it is also likely that they have high expectations for their child's achievement in school (Wilder, 2014).

The meta-analysis by Castro et al. (2015) investigated the connection between academic achievement and parental involvement, drawing on 37 different studies taking place in a wide range of classrooms, from kindergarten to secondary schools, between 2000 and 2013. Castro et al. found that high achievement is directly connected to parents who focused on general supervision of their children's learning activities. Strong associations were also found when the families carried high academic expectations for their children, developed and maintained communication with them about school

activities, and helped them to develop reading habits by practicing at home (Castro et al., 2015). Along similar lines, Boonk et al. (2018) determined that the strongest associations between parental involvement and student success can be achieved in the following ways by parents:

1. Reading at home with one's child;
2. Holding high expectations/aspirations for a child's academic achievement and schooling;
3. Communicating with the child about school; and
4. Encouraging and supporting the child in terms of learning outcomes (p. 25)

Academic achievement is viewed as a gold standard of how parent involvement can impact a student's success. Grades do not reflect the only marker for achievement and success in a student's journey; nevertheless, they do arguably represent a concrete measurement for finding a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement.

Relationships and Non-Academic Measures

The positive results of increased parental engagement can also be demonstrated beyond such traditional measures of academic achievement. For instance, one of the fundamental goals of education is to connect school and home in a relationship that complements the two spheres, rather than positioning them as separate entities. In the past, schooling and home life used to be viewed as separate (Hill & Taylor, 2004). As school and education are perceived as being vital to success and students are expected to

achieve at even higher levels, it is more important than ever to create a partnership between learning at home and at school (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

With increased collaboration between schools and the home, the positive impacts have been demonstrated and recorded. For example, when parents are more involved in their child's education, it is assumed that there is a higher degree of communication between the teacher and the parents. Experts agree that this increase allows the parents to gain insight and information about the students' learning and progress while creating shared goals that create an environment for higher achievement and role-modeling of appropriate behaviour (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Stevens & Patel, n.d.). Beyond grades as the singular measurement of success, a student's performance can also be measured through non-conventional methods, such as through teacher ratings of the student and overall academic and social success compared to their peers (Niia et al., 2015; Wilder, 2014).

To date, parental involvement has been strongly associated with improvements in cognition, language, and social emotional development (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2016); it also has significantly positive impacts on children's self-esteem, emotional self-regulation, and self-perceptions of academic competence (Oswald et al., 2018; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Thus, parental involvement plays a role in how a student feels about participating in school. As discussed earlier, when parents are more involved and have positive values and beliefs towards school, a student is more likely to have the inclination to participate and, in turn, to be successful at school.

Through a teacher and parental lens, student participation creates opportunities for higher academic achievement. There are also other benefits that arise, including the creation of a

healthier experience of social inclusion for the student (Niia et al., 2015). This allows the students to feel involved and gratified for more than just their academic success.

Student attendance continues to be problematic in public schools. Poor attendance is frequently linked to lower academic achievement and student success (Gottfried, 2009; Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017; Rafa, 2017). According to a meta-analysis of nine studies by McConnell and Kubina (2014), parent involvement has implicit effects on student attendance in school. By extension, it can be inferred that because parent involvement has strong ties to student attendance it would therefore also lead to higher student achievement. The findings indicate that securing parent involvement in student attendance at an early age will ultimately help families promote good attendance throughout a student's school career and, therefore, create a better environment for student success (McConnell, 2014).

Parent engagement also has an indirect impact on student motivation and success. Parents who are involved with their child's schooling on site usually have the ability and understanding to support their education at home. By being involved and providing help to their children, the parents motivate the children to learn. Although parental engagement cannot guarantee academic success, it can boost the motivation of the child and give them the best opportunity to succeed (Ahmad et al., 2016). Furthermore, there is evidence that parental involvement that leads to consistent communication between the teacher and parent can lead to students developing higher academic self-efficacy, engagement, and intrinsic motivation (Fan & Williams, 2010; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014)

Overall, the results from prominent meta-analyses in this field indicate a positive relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2003, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Wilder, 2014). Parent involvement also positively impacts the students' self-work efficacy and intrinsic motivation towards school (Fan & Williams, 2010).

Negative Impacts of Parental Involvement

Although there is overwhelming evidence that parental involvement is beneficial for a student's academic achievement, there is evidence that supports the opposing view. This view suggests that parental involvement can have a negative impact on a student, specifically in regard to homework. For instance, there is sometimes a negative correlation between parental homework assistance and student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2017a; Wilder, 2014). Despite this evidence, there are also positive types of parent involvement and practices with student homework that can arguably mitigate these less-desirable outcomes.

Parental autonomy support, which is defined as "... the degree to which parents value and use techniques which encourage independent problem solving, choice, and participation in decisions" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 144), was found to be beneficial to students' success with homework. Parent attitudes and tactics for engaging in their child's homework also plays a large role. For instance, parents who display low expectations regarding their child's ability to complete work, usually turn towards a higher degree of interference and a more controlling style when assisting with their child's schoolwork (Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Patall et al., 2008). Similarly, if parents who want to help with homework, though well-intentioned, display a negative attitude

towards the work, this can hinder the students' growth and lead to anxiety (Maloney et al., 2015). Alternatively, parents who hold positive beliefs towards their child's self-work efficacy consequently can create an environment where supplementary work can be introduced to aid in the students' ability to grow in the intended area of study (Gonida & Cortina, 2014).

Overall, different styles of parent intervention into students' homework are likely to have distinct impacts on student achievement and these effects may vary depending on student and parent practices and ideologies when it comes to homework (Patall et al., 2008). In other words, although certain types of parental involvement can be beneficial, more involvement in students' homework is not always better for the student (Pomerantz et al., 2007).

Significance of Findings

The purpose of this section was to help the reader understand the different roles that parents play in a student's success at school; specifically, it considers the effects of parental involvement and engagement on a student's academic career. This investigation is significant because it increases awareness around the need for parents to be actively involved in a child's education. To date, there has been significant research and discussion in this area by the education community. The results of this research overwhelmingly support the finding that parent involvement and engagement plays a positive role in a child's academic journey, including positive impacts on academics, motivation, social-emotional needs, and a positive perception of school. Evidently, it is also noteworthy that a parent's expectations massively impact the students' beliefs and values of the role of school in their own lives. Although there has been a small negative

effect with parental involvement and homework, this can be attributed to those parents approaching homework with a pre-existing negative mindset that spills over into the outcomes. Overall, the literature consistently points to the positive influence parents have on their children when they are involved and engaged in their schooling.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parent Involvement

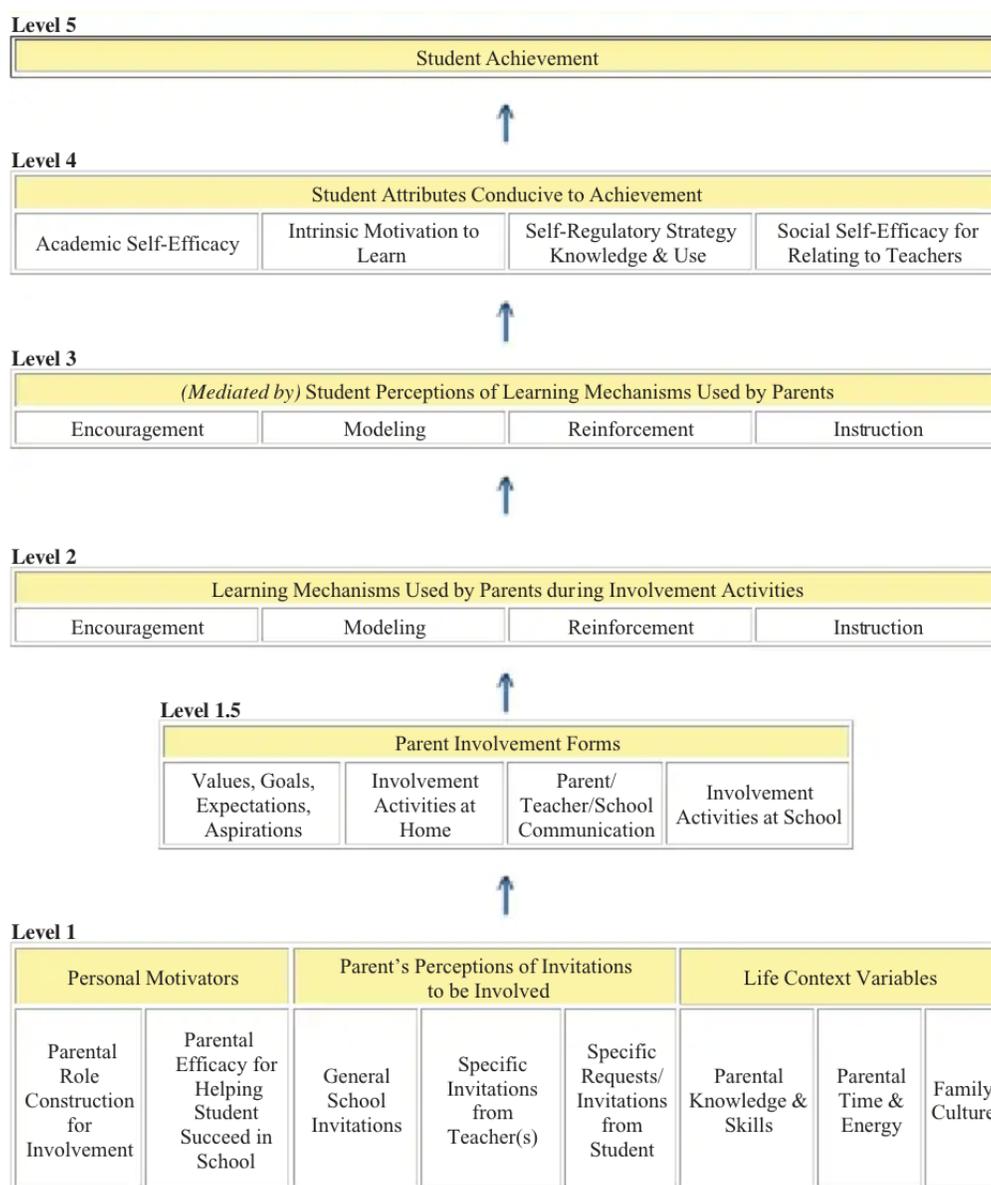
There is an optimistic perspective that parents should be involved in their child's education, because it can positively impact their child's educational journey. Teachers work hard to ensure that parents are as involved as possible in their child's education. This engagement will help guide and reinforce concepts that can make the students more proficient in their educational skills. Correspondingly, parents expect that teachers can guide and aid the process by giving them direction on how to best help their children at home. Every parent wants their child to be successful, but they are not always sure how to accomplish this goal and have the resources and self-efficacy in themselves to progress with their child. No matter how willing a parent might be to be actively involved with their child's education there are many factors that are evident that determine the extent of participation. By educators developing an understanding of the deeper issues that obstruct parental involvement, it could allow for varied practices to mediate these issues that parents face.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler are innovators in the field of understanding parental involvement in a child's education. They created and refined the Hoover-Dempsey Model over the past 20 years to understand the factors involved in parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997;

Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). The model provides a framework for the various elements that impact parental involvement (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler of Parent Involvement



Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

The levels proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, illuminate how family's decisions to be involved are made and how they can lead to student achievement. These levels are described below; however, I will close by primarily focusing on level 1 of the model because it is the level at which educators can have the greatest impact on the amount of parent involvement in a child's education (Turner-Vorbeck & Sheldon, 2019). The other levels are important, but for the purpose of staying focused on parental involvement there will only be a short overview of the other levels.

Overview of Levels from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model.

Figure 3

Level 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process

Personal Motivators		Parent's Perceptions of Invitations to be Involved			Life Context Variables		
Parental Role Construction for Involvement	Parental Efficacy for Helping Student Succeed in School	General School Invitations	Specific Invitations from Teacher(s)	Specific Requests/Invitations from Student	Parental Knowledge & Skills	Parental Time & Energy	Family Culture

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 1 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 1. Level 1 indicates that there are three major factors that influence the variety and frequency of parent and family involvement. The factors are (1) personal motivators, (2) contextual motivators (perceptions of invitations to be involved), and (3) life context variables.

Figure 4

Level 1.5 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement

Process

Parent Involvement Forms			
Values, Goals, Expectations, Aspirations	Involvement Activities at Home	Parent/ Teacher/School Communication	Involvement Activities at School

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 1.5 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 1.5. Level 1.5 of the model defines the different parental involvement forms, which include, (1) values, goals, expectations, and aspirations, (2) involvement activities at home, (3) parent/teacher communication, and (4) involvement at school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

These types of involvement include parents communicating with their children about their own personal and family values, goals, expectations, and aspirations along with promoting open dialogue about the student's day and expressing interest in their schooling and school activities. Moreover, it important for parents and teachers to have open, respectful communication around the student's experiences at school, along with parents becoming involved with various school-based activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997)

Figure 5*Level 2 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process*

Learning Mechanisms Used by Parents during Involvement Activities			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 2 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 2. Level 2 of the model suggests that the learning mechanics used by parents with involvement activities need to use (1) encouragement, (2) modelling, (3) reinforcement, and (4) instruction to facilitate the student's attributes for school success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

Figure 6*Level 3 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process*

(Mediated by) Student Perceptions of Learning Mechanisms Used by Parents			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 3 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 3. Level 3 heavily relies on level two and therefore a student's perception of their parent's use of the four previously mentioned mechanics lead to a student embodying their parent's attitudes and beliefs and translating them into their own attributes which lead to academic success.

Figure 7*Level 4 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process*

Student Attributes Conducive to Achievement			
Academic Self-Efficacy	Intrinsic Motivation to Learn	Self-Regulatory Strategy Knowledge & Use	Social Self-Efficacy for Relating to Teachers

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 4 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 4. Level 4 describes a set of four beliefs and behaviours that are tightly associated with academic achievement. These attributes are, (1) academic self-efficacy, (2) intrinsic motivation to learn, (3) self-regulatory strategy knowledge and use, and (4) social self-efficacy for relating to teachers. If a student can embrace these qualities, it can lead to higher academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

Figure 8*Level 5 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parent Engagement Process*

Student Achievement

Note. Broñosa, Diane R. (n.d.). *Level 5 of The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement* [Conceptual model]. Parent Involvement in Reading.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420084936/Parental-Involvement-in-reading-pdf>

Level 5. Level 5 is the final goal of the student reaching achievement. The model relies on parental involvement, as described in each level. It is essential that the parents model processes, influence and if so it can predict student outcome (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

Influences of Level 1 of Parent Engagement

It is useful for teachers to understand level 1, because it can give insight into how to promote family involvement in a student's education. It can also influence the types of invitations that teachers and schools can extend to families and help them better understand how personal, social, and cultural factors play large roles in a family's capacity to be involved in a student's education (Turner-Vorbeck & Sheldon, 2019). In this section, we explore the different foundations behind family involvement behaviours. They consist of personal, contextual and life context motivators for parental involvement.

Personal Motivators. Personal motivators include a parent's beliefs about their role in their child's education and whether they have developed a positive sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school. This motivator can be influenced by the parent's own family and academic experiences in school and how it shaped their perception of schools and participation in their child's education, while incorporating their own family system (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Turner-Vorbeck & Sheldon, 2019; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Furthermore, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), highlight that parents who have a low level of belief in their own abilities in education, tend to veer away from school and teacher contact. This can be further exacerbated if instruction at their child's school is not in their first language or if they have had previous negative experiences with being involved with their child's schooling. Parental involvement also depends on how the parents view their own child's intelligence and how it is developed. If a parent thinks that a child's intelligence is "fixed" and that school will suffice in educating their child, parent participation can falter. Alternatively, if parents view success at school as

requiring effort and time and that a child's intelligence can grow in accordance with that, then parent involvement can increase (Murray et al., 2014).

The two sections of personal motivators in the model are parental role construction for involvement and parents' self-efficacy for being able to help their child succeed in school. The parental role construction is the parent's personal belief or viewpoint of what their responsibility is in relation to their child's schooling. Essentially, "what do parents believe that parents are supposed to do in relation to their children's education and educational progress?" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 9)

Parent self-efficacy is how a parent views their knowledge and skills and if their involvement will have a positive or negative impact on the student's success. In short, "...do parents believe that, through their involvement, they can exert a positive influence on children's educational outcomes?" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 17). For instance, parental educational level plays a contributing role in parental involvement and parents who are not confident in their own skill level or who are intimidated by the material can veer away from active involvement due to their lack of confidence (Oswald et al., 2018; Peña, 2000).

Contextual Motivators (Perceptions of Invitation). The contextual motivators that determine parent involvement can take three forms, general invitations, specific teacher invitations, and specific invitations from a child. General invitations from a school relates to how welcomed a parent feels by the school community. Specific teacher invitations convey teacher requests to academically support a student at home or to attend parent-teacher conferences. Specific invitations from a child can include asking for help with schoolwork or dealing with school associated issues (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005;

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). In general, contextual motivators are the parent's perception of what invitations they have received to be part of their child's education. These invitations play a vital role in solidifying whether the parents view themselves as an active participant in their child's education and in the school community.

Using the Hoover-Dempsey Model, Murrey et al. (2014), investigated the barriers and facilitators among a sample of 44 predominately low-income, African American parents whose children attended urban public schools. If a parent perceived their child's school as a non-welcoming environment, the parent's willingness to be involved in their child's education declined. The article highlights the need for policy changes to address and mitigate these issues. Murrey et al. (2014) stress the need for schools to build a strong parent-school partnership by implementing practical steps. For instance, they have suggested:

1. Implementing more reliable and timely methods of communication such as social media or texting.
2. Allowing for more casual conversations that allow for the celebration of success rather than only communicating about failures or issues.
3. Having school meetings and events at varied times to allow parents to overcome scheduling issues.
4. Having other members of the school (counsellors, social workers and human service professionals) play a larger role in fostering a strong parent-teacher relationship.

The model identifies schools, teachers, or the child to be the instigators of these invitations. Another important factor is the parent's perception of how valued their

involvement is with their child by teachers and administrators (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Epstein (2010) also found that parents were more willing to be involved when the teachers actively promoted and valued parent involvement.

The amount and type of parental involvement can vary within families. Parent participation in a child's education can happen at home, school, or in the community. Parental participation at home can involve helping with homework, sharing positive family values, making learning fun, talking about the classroom happenings or communicating with the teacher. School-based participation can include parent-teacher conferences, volunteering for field trips and attending school events. Community involvement includes a family's connection to different organizations that are affiliated with schools (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Turner-Vorbeck & Sheldon, 2019). Additionally, because technology continues to grow as an integral part of education, it gives rise to more opportunities for families to be involved and connected in their child's education. This will be explored later in this paper.

Life Context. Finally, life context are other factors that contribute to the availability of parents to be involved. These include a parent's understanding of their own skills and knowledge, a parent's perception of time and energy, and different family cultures (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) explains how important a parent's understanding of their own knowledge and skills are. They explain that it is an essential indicator of how likely it is that a parent will become involved in their child's schooling.

Parents' perceptions of their personal skills appear to shape their thinking about the kinds of involvement activities that may be possible for them to undertake with a reasonable likelihood of achieving success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Hoover- Dempsey et al. (1995), for example, reported that elementary parents reflected on their knowledge and skills when confronted with specific demands of helping their children with work. If they perceived their skills to be adequate, they tended to be positive about engaging in the activity... (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 114).

A parent's perception of their time and energy encompasses how work hours, varied family obligations and the reality of being involved in different educational opportunities that the school offers impact the parent (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Furthermore, Turner (2019) highlights that a family's time, energy, knowledge, skills and resources play a huge role in enhancing a student's learning opportunities and outcomes.

Additionally, family culture plays a vital role in life context variables. As stated by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005),

... schools must respect and respond to family culture and family circumstances in order to access the full power of parental support for student learning.

Specifically, we suggest that schools must frame their efforts to support parents' personal motivations for involvement, their actions to invite involvement, and their responses to families' life- context issues within a broad understanding of family culture (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 116).

Select Life Context Factors That Influence Parent Engagement

Time. A study completed by Brock and Edmunds (2010), surveyed 116 grade 7 and 8 parents about home-school communications and learning-at-home practices. According to their findings there was no relationship between parental age and the level of involvement, but their findings showed prevalent obstructions for parental involvement where there was a lack of time available and where school activities conflicted with work commitments. The study highlighted that time is a major underlying factor that can impact parental involvement (Brock & Edmunds, 2010). Although there are ways to overcome this obstacle, so many activities that promote positive and meaningful parental involvement require considerable time commitments (Finns, 1998). However, there is evidence that parents who face time restraints due to work or other commitments are not completely void in being involved in their child's education. Due to the limited amount of time and energy, especially families with younger students, household activities such as reading and playing games take president over school appearances such as volunteering and attending school events (Barger et al., 2019). The fact that working parents may not have the luxury of always having extra time to commit to being present at school events does not mean there is no support happening at home (Oswald et al., 2018).

Relationship Status. It can be noted that there is lower parental involvement among divorced or single parents as they generally have less time to actively participate in their child's education compared to situations where there are both parents in a single household (Oswald et al., 2018). In addition, remarried stepfamily members potentially face barriers in becoming involved in a stepchild's education, particularly due to the fact

that there are typically no formal arrangements put in place to facilitate parent expectations (Ono et al., 2013).

Additionally, stay-at-home parents are generally more involved compared to employed parents in their child's schooling. On the other hand, it is noted that although single parents might not be able to provide as much time to directly participate in their child's education, they can find other ways to support their child in their educational journey (Oswald et al., 2018).

Socio-Economic Status. Academic literature supports that parents with higher social class backgrounds are more involved in their child's education compared to parents from lower class backgrounds, whether the involvement takes place at school or home (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Wang et al., 2016). However, there is evidence that the link between socio-economic status and parent involvement is not so clear cut. Robinson (2014), explains that there is evidence that supports that parent involvement does not always take place as an active role but also as a passive role. Robinson explains,

In general, it seems that a greater share of parents with higher social class backgrounds show a preference for more active or optional forms of involvement than parents from lower social class backgrounds. The opposite appears to be the case when it comes to forms of involvement that can be characterized as either more passive (e.g., rules about homework and grades) or appear to be mandatory (e.g., conferences with teachers, principals, or meeting with counsellors); these measures either do not show a discernible upward trend or are adopted by a greater share of parents from lower social class backgrounds. (p. 40)

To support Robinson's findings, a study by Cooper and Crosnoe (2007), suggested that economically disadvantaged families were no less involved in the schooling process compared to middle and upper-class parents. This correlation was not expected but could be due to the fact that the study focused on at-school involvement and that the teacher initiated a majority of the involvement. Cooper and Crosnoe state that,

The observed association between economic disadvantage and parental involvement in education may be child driven. If the disadvantaged children in the sample are older and lower achieving than they would be expected to have less involved parents, [...], the involvement of economically disadvantaged parents may more likely be teacher initiated, whereas non-disadvantaged parents may engage in more parent-initiated involvement (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007, p. 385).

According to Epstein, the distinction between the two types of involvement is important. Parent-initiated involvement is linked with higher levels of academic achievement, compared to teacher-initiated involvement (Epstein, 1996). This could explain the variance of the findings.

How Teachers Can Address These Barriers

It is key for teachers to recognize and understand the importance that the relationship between schools and parents play in creating a desired environment that allows parents to feel empowered and invested in their child's education. By accomplishing this, the barriers that are present can become more manageable and therefore enables educators to create varied policies and best practices that can encourage new and meaningful partnerships with parents (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

Parents can become stressed about being contacted by a teacher because there is a connotation that something is wrong, and this assumption furthers the gap between the parents and teacher because the parents can feel unsupported. This common situation stresses the importance of being able to communicate openly about the successes and challenges for children and families (Brock & Edmunds, 2010; Graham-Clay, 2005). Educators should try to mitigate these preconceived ideas and move forward to promote communication between the parents and teachers to create a positive dialogue that can benefit the parents and the students.

A factor that is apparent in the academic literature, is that meaningful relationships between the teacher/school and families of the students are vital in promoting parental involvement (Brock & Edmunds, 2010; Epstein, 1992, 1996, 2010a; Finns, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Jeynes, 2018; Oswald et al., 2018; Ritblatt et al., 2002). Therefore, it is fundamental for educators to set up a routine that promotes meaningful communication with parents and families that highlights the successes as well as the challenges that students face in school. It is important to seek frequent positive communication to increase parent relationships and build trust (Graham-Clay, 2005; Ritblatt et al., 2002).

Modes of Communication

Technology is increasingly becoming a standardized part of most people's lives. The majority of people have access to a phone or computer in their daily life. According to Stats Canada in 2018, 91% of Canadians aged 15 and older used the internet on a regular basis (Government of Canada, 2019) and Statista, a German company that collects data through market and opinion research institutes, predict that 99% of the

Canadian population will have online access with either a computer or smartphone by 2023 (*Number of Internet Users in Canada, 2019*). These numbers indicate a unique chance for educators to take advantage of this resource and utilize this window of opportunity to create a better environment for communication between home and school. From an educator's point of view, the increased availability of technology and various communication channels, including the proliferation of smartphones, holds huge potential for improving education (Ishii, et al., 2019). To that end, many new and evolving electronic programs and platforms are creating positive opportunities for improving communication between teachers, parents, and schools.

Schools and teachers are constantly looking for ways to more effectively communicate with parents. The era of paper notices, daily written agendas, and written notes is being supplemented as different styles of education-based communication are popularized. With this spike in the use of smartphone and computer communication mediums, such as email, text message, social media and e-portfolios, are becoming a more effective and obvious way to communicate with parents. According to Thompson, Mazer, and Grady (2015), who surveyed almost 1,400 parents about the importance of communication across different mediums, the majority of parents believe that academic support and new communication technologies are important to their children's education. They found that depending on the depth and significance of the topic various forms of communication can be beneficial. For instance, some parents preferred the fast response time of text messages for simple issues, while many parents preferred email or face-to-face conversation for more significant issues (Thompson et al., 2015).

Parents and educators both place a high value on keeping each other informed about a student's progress and see the value in using technology as a means for staying actively involved in these communicative acts (Kraft & Rogers, 2015; Olmstead, 2013). Technology can build a stronger relationship between schools and parents because of the timeliness and rate that communication can occur at (Natale & Lubniewski, 2018). Furthermore, increased communication between school and parents can create stronger teacher–student relationships, expand parental involvement, and increase student motivation, which can lead to an increase in a student's completion of homework and academic achievement, as well as a decrease in misbehaviour during class time (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013). Within an educational setting, effective communication serves as an integral contribution to the academic, social, and emotional success of students (Natale & Lubniewski, 2018).

So, how can technology improve parent involvement in a student's career, and how can different platforms aid in increasing the opportunity for parent communication? The next section will focus on reviewing and examining several tools, services and people regarding digital communication in schools. The goal of the section is to highlight the different tools available and the diverse attributes they possess.

Increasing Parental Involvement

Christine Olmstead is a leader in the conversation around using technology as a means to increase parental involvement in schools. With a depth of experience in the roles of a classroom teacher, administrator, and at the district level, Olmstead has the essential practical experience that has shaped her research into the appropriate application and use of technology inside schools. Olmstead's (2013) influential contribution, a paper

entitled “*Using Technology to Increase Parent Involvement in Schools*”, has been used as a supporting pillar for other research in this emerging field of study. This paper examines the different types of communication technology available, and it assesses the pros and cons of each medium (Olmstead, 2013). More specifically, Olmstead routinely stresses the importance of proactive parent involvement in a student’s academic career and suggests ways that this can be promoted. She argues that communication through different technological mediums increases the opportunity and capability for parents to become more actively involved in their child’s schooling. Furthermore, communications between parents and schools is an obtainable and an imperative factor when trying to achieve higher amounts of parental involvement (Olmstead, 2013).

In the ever-growing world of technology, the different programs and platforms available to educators are vast—and potentially overwhelming. Nonetheless, these existing and emerging electronic communication technologies can provide the capacity for teachers to increase the ways in which parents can be involved in their children’s education (Olmstead, 2013).

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory (MRT) is a framework that can be viewed through an educational lens, which aims to gain an understanding of how the richness of the mode of media chosen can translate the full meaning and complexity of the task or intended message (Daft & Lengel, 1986). It strives to see how different mediums of communication lead to a better understanding than the initial message intended (Ishii et al., 2019; Thompson & Mazer, 2012). According to Daft et al., the ability to relay the full

meaning of a communication is connected to the “richness” of the medium of communication, which is determined by four factors (Daft et al., 1987):

1. The capability for immediate feedback.
2. The capacity for multiple cues, including auditory and visual cues and physical presence.
3. The level of natural language to assist in explaining an idea.
4. The ability to personalize a message

That being said, there is also a general consensus that each mode of communication that is used to communicate with parents has its benefits and downfalls (Ishii et al., 2019; Lan & Sie, 2010). For example, Land and Sie (2010) applied MRT to three mediums of communication to examine whether one mode was more or less efficient in communicating educational information. To this end, they studied:

- really simple syndication (RSS),
- email, and
- short message service (SMS).

Their results showed that email delivered the richest content channel for detailed quantities of information. SMS demonstrated its effectiveness in providing timely communication. RSS highlighted its ability to aggregate information with accuracy and adaptability and provide timely information to the subscribers. Although this study focuses on how communication technologies can improve mobile learning environments, it provides valuable, specific information that shows how different mediums of communication could be seized upon by teachers to effectively engage parents depending on the need for higher levels of richness through the communication. Drawing on

discussions about MRT will therefore help educators to relay necessary information to parents more effectively, efficiently, and accurately.

Mediums of Communication

According to Graham-Clay (2005), communication strategies can be one- or two-way. One-way communication is epitomized by written communications home to parents, such as newsletters, which provide basic information and notices but do not promote open dialogue between parents and teachers. Two-way communication, on the other hand, occurs when teachers and parents dialogue together. The necessary conditions for this dialogue are created when there are opportunities for parents and teachers—both parties—to share information openly and honestly, the teachers recognize the parents' concerns, and both parties discuss the students' progress and behaviour. Graham-Clay has also identified specific action principles that promote parent engagement and communication with teachers and schools. The three core principles as proposed by Graham-Clay have been summarized by Donley (2020):

1. Survey your families regarding their perceptions of how you communicate (both one-way and two-way) with them regarding their child's progress and determine where these communications might be improved. Ensure that positive aspects of children's progress are included in communications.
2. Determine whether all families have access to the technology needed to communicate with you and provide paper-based or other communications as necessary.
3. Engage in high-quality professional learning to help you communicate effectively with families with cultural backgrounds different from your own.

4. Carefully review your parent conference processes to ensure that they invite parents to actively participate and contribute insights into their children's academic progress. (p. 3)

These action principles support MRT by supporting and diversifying the modes of communication that are needed to connect with different families with different needs. They also promote opportunities to create deeper, more meaningful communication and conversations that are intended to benefit the student.

E-portfolios. E-portfolios are a collection of digital artifacts and work that can be assessed by the teacher, while also allowing parents the opportunity to explore their child's work and teacher's feedback. This unique function grants the opportunity to create transparent and open dialogue between the parents and teachers about the work while still involving the student. This two-way communication creates a higher quality, more meaningful type of interaction between parents and teachers (Donley, 2020, p. 3).

The higher quality communication afforded by e-portfolios produces concrete results. For instance, Izzo et al. (1999) explain that improving the quality of parent-teacher interactions uniquely predicts improvements to both the child's behaviour and academic achievement. The same study indicates that focusing on meaningful discussions about the whole student school experience (students' behaviour, work and achievements) could have a positive impact on student success at school; meanwhile, this replaces a tendency to primarily utilize communication in order to relay information about students' behaviour (e.g., contacting home to report problematic behaviour).

E-portfolios create unique opportunities for two-way communication between the parent, and teacher. Depending on the platform, parents have access to gradebooks,

outlined expectations, assignments, due dates and messaging that create opportunities for parents to communicate with their own child regarding schoolwork and progress. This may also prompt parents to reach out to teachers more frequently because they feel more involved in their child's education (Tan, 2012). As a result, e-portfolios provide the opportunity for both parent involvement at home and home-school communication, and this can enhance the opportunity for better support for the student, leading to higher achievement.

Despite the aforementioned benefits of e-portfolios, there must be measures in place to grant accessibility for all parties involved. For instance, Patrikakou (2016) notes that schools and districts must ensure that such technology use won't alienate families whose access to technology may vary. The possible solutions offered to mitigate this risk range from offering alternative access to technology, such as public libraries, to expanding specific programs and initiatives for checking out tablets or laptops in their local communities (Patrikakou, 2016).

Platforms such as FreshGrade, ClassDojo, Edmodo, and Seesaw provide the opportunity for these deeper, more meaningful communications to occur. When parents are able to understand their child's learning process, skills, abilities, and opinions, then this enables them to foster deeper, more meaningful conversations with their child and ultimately create better communication and effective collaboration between teachers, students and parents (Higgins & Cherrington, 2017; Theodosiadou & Konstantinidis, 2015). Not only did e-portfolios lead to stronger online communication between the parents and teachers, but also to the extended families that gained access to the students' work (Gallagher, 2018).

Different types of communication also percolated from using an e-portfolio platform. An increase in face-to-face communication between families and teachers can also be created as a result of the parents and extended families viewing the students' work on-line or seeing comments that the e-portfolios provided (Goodman, 2017; Higgins & Cherrington, 2017). The advantage of e-portfolios is that it provides the opportunity for one-way and two-way communication between parents and teachers but also provides follow-up questions and opportunities such as links to resources that could be used to explore the topics into more depth (Goodman, 2017; Higgins & Cherrington, 2017). Additionally, the frequency with which additional information or supplemental materials were added to the e-portfolio by families was increased compared to a paper format; therefore, this implies higher engagement by families (Hooker, 2015, 2016). This evidence strengthens the case that e-portfolios can be a superior mode of communication through the MRT lens: it enables users to access multiple modes of communication.

E-portfolios are becoming more popular all around the world in many divergent fields. Likewise, they are increasingly being viewed as a unique assessment tool for teachers to use, while also promoting parent interest and involvement in their child's education (Gallagher, 2018; Hooker, 2017; Petersen, 2016). All of these factors suggest there is a strong case to be made for the implementation of e-portfolios in classroom practice.

Phone Messaging and Smartphones. Olmstead (2013) highlights another medium with potential benefits and risks for parent-teacher communication: phone messaging. She explains that this is a more attractive option for parents due to the quick, direct access to the instructor. However, teachers have legitimate concerns. They find

phone messaging to be a less attractive option compared to the others outlined above due to the fact that most schools do not provide a work phone, thus forcing teachers to provide their personal information to the parents. This sharing of personal contact information inherently puts teachers at risk of always being on call, as well as other potentially negative consequences and safety issues that are associated with this direct access (Olmstead, 2013).

As Ishii (2019) explains, the convenience of a communication method can influence what mode of communication is used even if the richness of another mode of communication is greater. This explanation is supported by the work of Lan and Sie (2010), who find that text messaging is valued primarily because of its convenience and timeliness. This emphasizes the importance of further investigating text messages as a potential mode of communication between schools and parents, especially because the modern family is generally familiar and comfortable with smartphone technology (Ishii et al., 2019). Many scholars have suggested that with appropriate student use, smartphones could be used as an effective educational tool, if students can effectively use them in class (Ho et al., 2013; Sykes, 2014); however, there has not been much research to date regarding how text messaging could increase parent-teacher communication (Thompson et al., 2015).

Email. Checking one's email has become a daily routine for most Canadians. According to the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), it is the most common online activity. This fact is central to email being used as an effective tool for teachers and parents to connect (*2019 Canada's Internet Factbook Report*, n.d.).

Olmstead (2013) highlights the effectiveness of email as a medium of communication between parents and teachers, and she believes that email is an effective tool to promote proactive involvement of parents. Similarly, Thompson (2015) finds that parents prefer email as a main communication tool due to:

1. *Convenience*- since family's lives are busy and email allows parents to read and reply in their own time.
2. *Accessibility*- since the proliferation of smartphones makes it a straightforward and convenient way for parents to communicate with teachers.
3. *Effectiveness*- since it allows parents to fully explain and take their time to communicate a more meaningful message.

Other influential scholars support Olmstead's findings. Email is regularly praised by educational literature due to the convenience associated with asynchronous communication, especially when physical face-to-face meet-ups can be a challenge to orchestrate due to busy schedules (Skipp & Campo-Flores, 2003; Thompson & Mazer, 2012).

As Goodall (2014) states, allowing the continuum of communication between parents and teaching staff can create the opportunity for real, authentic dialogue. She also highlights that, since communicating about the intricacies of home-life, behaviour, and the flow of information and communication takes substantially more time than can be relayed in a report card, it is paramount to apply other methods of communication as well. Importantly, parents and staff would have the chance to control the flow of

information, thereby providing both parents and teachers an opportunity to ask questions and probe for answers.

Email is an attractive mode of communication between teachers and parents; however, it is not an overall solution. Email also comes with some downfalls. According to MRT, it is less effective when one is communicating about complex or sensitive matters on account of delayed feedback, limited nonverbal cues, and decreased personal focus. With increased smartphone use, there are arguably even better modes of communication that relay a richer mode of communication (Thompson et al., 2015).

Social Media. According to Olmstead (2013), social networks such as Facebook and Twitter could serve as excellent tools to keep parents informed about general school events and activities. That said, she found that these tools would be best used on a school-based level to communicate with the parent population rather than on an individual level. Similarly, Cox & McLeod, (2014) support the use of social media tools on an administration level. In their article, they investigate the role of social media platforms with regards to their use on a school-wide basis. Their findings indicate that social media can serve as an effective communication tool in the following ways:

- 1) by engaging stakeholders in two-way conversations;
- 2) by leading to a higher level of transparency regarding decision-making;
- 3) by allowing for greater interactions between school principals and their stakeholders;
- 4) by connecting local stakeholders to fellow educators and to the world; and
- 5) by creating opportunity for personal and professional growth.

In addition, Thompson (2015) puts forward that due to the increase of smartphone use and access to social media platforms, they have become an obvious choice for a communication tool due to its accessibility and convenience.

Looking at communication through an MRT lens creates the opportunity and prospect for administrators, superintendents, and districts alike to implement focused programs through social media—ones that target specific elements of parental academic support and that can be taught to enhance understanding across an entire school district (Thompson & Mazer, 2012).

Further Research

Understanding and using the full potential of technology in schools for positive change is a challenging undertaking. There are many factors and unknowns that have to be explored and solved before increased integration can take place between technology and schools. In order to move forward with research into how optimal communication between parents and teachers can be achieved, new lines of inquiry must be pursued to understand the larger picture.

It is imperative to pursue the following questions. How will privacy preferences and policies impact the opportunity for parents and teachers to openly communicate? Should parent involvement change, as students get older? What are realistic goals for the time commitments of both home and school regarding communication? These are essential questions that still require further research, intense observation, and a focus on realistic expectations, while keeping in mind the changing and evolving role of technology in our day-to-day world. It is difficult to predict the implications these changes will have on schools and families in the future. A definite in all these inquires is

that parents, teachers, and communities must continue to work toward the common goal of facilitating the best educational practices and experience for students.

Chapter Three: Parent Engagement Resources

In this chapter, a PDF collection of entries and posts found at <https://slgorman.opened.ca/category/parent-engagement-resources/> are presented. Please see external file, “*Gorman_Sean_MEdProject_2021_002_Chapter 3- Parent Engagement Resources*” to view the above-mentioned posts in a PDF format.

The screenshots contain an assortment of resources that teachers can use to promote parent involvement and engagement in their classroom communities. In each of the sections, there are resources that teachers can use and reconfigure to their own needs to aid in promoting parent engagement. The goal of this website and individual entries is to create accessible, ready-made, and practical resources that teachers can use without the onerous task of creating their own.

Below is the organization of the PDF files in

“*Gorman_Sean_MEdProject_2021_002_Chapter 3- Parent Engagement Resources*”.

- Chapter Three: Parent Engagement Resources
 - Start of the Year
 - Rationale
 - Classroom Parent Information Package
 - Parent Engagement Fact Sheet
 - “Getting to Know” Surveys
 - Learning Celebrations
 - Celebrating Math Learning Night

- Poetea- A Celebration of Poetry
- Student-Led Café Conference
- Winter/Christmas Carnival
- A Celebration of Culture and Diversity
- Talent Show
- Learning Through Reinvention of the Traditional Science Fair
- Art Walk Learning Celebration
- Family Game Night
- Providing Positivity- Positivity Journal

Chapter Four: Conclusion

In this chapter, an audio file is presented to share my concluding remarks and reflection on this project and program. Please see external file, “*Gorman_Sean_MEdProject_2021_003_Chapter 4_Reflection (Audio File).m4a*” to listen to the final reflection.

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