Growing New Roots: The Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of Their Children

Resource Book for Educators and Immigrant Families

Edited by Antoinette Gagné
OISE
University of Toronto

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
10th Floor, Modern Language Centre
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 1V6

First Edition: May 2007

ESL INFUSION INITIATIVE AND OISE/UT PRESENTS
"GROWING NEW ROOTS:
Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of their Children"

This project was a collaborative effort of many people who shared both their time and expertise. We extend a special thank you to the advisory group, the research team, the facilitators, the interpreters, and most of all the immigrant families and the teachers of their children for making the DVD and resource book possible.

THANK YOU!

Research Team

Principal Investigator
Antoinette Gagné,

Project Managers
Lee-Anne Gershater
Sameena Eidoo

Graduate Research Assistants

Jolanta Garus
Ranya Khan
Mario Lopez-Gopar
Sheila Manji

Work-Study Students

Kashfia Iqbal
Sonu Sekhon
John Stephenson
Andrea Suley

Editorial Assistants

Ranya Khan
Sheila Manji

Facilitators/Interpreters

Nouha Sibai
Maysa Salem
Sid Abdullahi
Faduma Awow Mohamed
Shijing Xu
Nadira Sheralam
Larisa Selivanov
Hana El-Fiki
Tetyana Ryaboshapko
Natalya Sinitskaya

The parents and caregivers from:
the Arabic-speaking Community,
the Caribbean Community,
the Mandarin-speaking Community,
the Russian-speaking Community,
the Somali-speaking Community,
and
the Urdu-speaking Community

The teachers, principals, and settlement workers who agreed to participate

The Advisory Group

Paula Markus, ESL Coordinator, Toronto District School Board

Mehru Ali, Education Domain Leader, Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)

Mario Calla, Executive Director, COSTI Immigrant Services

Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

Peter Dorfman, Settlement Workers in the Schools Provincial Coordinator

Production Team

John Popalis
Neil Tinker
Kurt Visser
Troy Vox

Table of Contents

What is the "Growing New Roots in the Community: Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of their Children" Project?

To gain insight into the communication barriers that exist between educators and immigrant and refugee families, a team of researchers, funded by Canadian Heritage, conducted a series of focus group interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to examine the relationships between immigrant and refugee parents and the teachers, principals, and settlement workers who work with these communities.

In this resource book, we use the term *low-voice communities* to refer to communities that have fewer institutional structures, have a greater need, and are made up of more recent arrivals. While preparing this handbook, we realized that the term *parent* has been previously used only to refer to mothers and fathers. In this resource book we will expand this definition to include any person who cares for a child. Thus, the term *parent* encompasses grandparents, extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings, as well as foster parents, gay and lesbian parents, and other legal guardians. The term *educator* refers to teachers, administrators, settlement workers, and teacher candidates.

The DVD that accompanies this handbook describes the experiences of parents from selected immigrant and refugee communities including the Mandarin-speaking community, the Russian-speaking community, the Somali-speaking community, the Urdu-speaking community, the Arabic-speaking community, and the Caribbean community. These groups were chosen because they have been identified as low-voice immigrant communities.

The focus group interviews provided groups of parents the opportunity to share their experiences and insights into the Canadian education system. It also provided teachers and principals who work with children from these low-voice communities the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas. The DVD of these focus groups was created with three aims. First, that it would promote cross-cultural understanding between immigrant and refugee families and their children's teachers. The second aim is to encourage greater interaction between families and school personnel. And finally, it is hoped that it will influence the development of programs, policies, and practices based on the information learned from the parents and school personnel interviewed for this project.

Organization of the Resource book

This handbook and its accompanying DVD are divided into eight chapters. Each chapter provides insight into experiences, views, and issues that are unique to the various low-voice immigrant and refugee communities featured in this series. It is our aim that the resource book will provide useful information to help schools and communities work together to remove the barriers that hinder communication. In doing so, we hope to promote inclusive practices that encourage families to become involved in the education of their children.

The eight chapters are:

1. Introduction

- the nature of family involvement and its importance for the school and the family
- different forms of family involvement activities
- obstacles to parent involvement and collaborative partnerships
- the role of the family's knowledge in effective family involvement

2. Language

- language barriers that impede communication between immigrant families and their children's teachers
- assumptions that are made about non-native English speaking families
- resources and practices that create an inclusive environment for non-English speakers

3. *Cultural Understanding*

- various aspects of culture
- integrating into a new culture
- preserving the home culture
- creating a school environment that promotes cultural understanding

4. *Communication*

- the importance of communication between educators and parents
- the problem of miscommunication
- suggestions on how to initiate communication with either the educators or the parents

5. *Relationship-Building*

- the significance of effective parent-teacher relationships
- the requirements for effective parent-teacher relationships
- parent and educator experiences of parent-teacher relationships
- barriers to and strategies for building effective parent-teacher relationships

6. *The Roles of Schools and Families*

- the role of the teacher in different cultures
- the role of the teacher in Canadian schools
- the role of the family in relation to their child's schooling

7. *Information for Parents*

- an understanding of the policies and procedures of the school
- strategies to access information
- empowering newcomer families by providing them with information

8. Conclusion

- a summary of the findings
- suggestions on how to build effective parent-teacher relationships
- a description of the responsibilities involved in creating effective relationships
- the importance of listening to educators and immigrant families

How to Use this Resource Book

The **Growing New Roots: Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of their Children** DVD can be used in two ways: on its own or as a workshop tool with this resource book. The DVD is available in two versions: a shorter version (40 minutes) and a longer version (120+ minutes). Educators, parents, and workshop facilitators can watch the DVD in its entirety or in segments.

The activities are flexible and meet a wide range of needs for educators and parents. The aim is to raise awareness and promote cross-cultural understanding between immigrant and refugee families and their children's teachers and to encourage greater interaction between families and school personnel. Educators, parents, or workshop facilitators can run a workshop on the entire program or select the chapters that meet their current needs.

The *Introduction* provides an overview of the questions and concerns raised by parents and educators surrounding family involvement in the schools. The first chapter in this handbook provides a summary of the scholarly literature on family involvement.

Chapters two to seven address six recurring themes raised by parents and educators. The six themes have been divided into the following sections:

- **Background information** to introduce the theme
- **An annotated bibliography** including books, journal articles, and websites

For Educators:
- **Discussion questions** before viewing and after viewing the DVD segment
- **Individual and/or group activities** to explore the topic in more depth
- **An in-school activity** to apply this knowledge in the school
- **A personal reflection** activity to help relate the concepts to lived experiences

For Parents:
- **Discussion questions** before and after viewing the DVD segment
- **Individual and/or group activities** to help relate the ideas to lived experiences

The *Conclusion* provides a summary of the primary concerns of the parents of low-voice communities and school personnel. Educators and parents provide suggestions for how to proceed. The last chapter in this resource book provides a synopsis of the findings and implications of this project.

How to Use the DVD and this Resource Book

The DVD on its Own

The DVD can be viewed from beginning to end or in segments/chapters. We suggest that you watch the DVD and then discuss the various themes. The questions accompanying each theme are useful for promoting discussion and/or reflection.

The DVD and Resource book on Your Own (1 hour or more)

We suggest watching the DVD in segments by theme as outlined in the *Table of Contents*. In the shorter DVD the thematic segments last about 5-7 minutes each. In the longer DVD the thematic segments last about 15-30 minutes each. Once you have watched the appropriate theme, refer to the corresponding section in the handbook. You can complete one of the accompanying activities or use a journal to record your responses to the *Discussion Questions* and *Personal Reflection Activity*.

The DVD and Resource book in a Workshop

Prior to the workshop, we recommend that the facilitator and the participants read the background information for the chapter to be discussed.

Option 1: 30 minutes – 1 hour

Choose a theme from the *Table of Contents*. Use the *Discussion Questions* in the accompanying handbook chapter to discuss the theme prior to watching the DVD segment. Watch the DVD segment. Answer the *Discussion Questions* in the accompanying resource book chapter to explore the information in the DVD. Try and make connections between what you see in the DVD and your own experiences.

Option 2: Two hours

Choose a theme from the *Table of Contents*. Use the *Discussion Questions* in the accompanying handbook chapter to discuss the theme prior to watching the DVD segment. Watch the DVD segment. Answer the *Discussion Questions* in the accompanying resource book chapter to explore the information in the DVD. Try and make connections between what you see in the DVD and your own experiences.

Educators: Choose one of the activities included in the relevant chapter. Leave 15 to 30 minutes at the end of the workshop to compete the *Personal Reflection Activity*.

Parents: Complete the activity included in the relevant chapter.

Option 3: Full Day (6 hours)

Prior to the workshop, we recommend that you select four hours of *Activities* that will be completed over the course of the day.

Over the course of the workshop day, the DVD should be viewed from start to finish. The DVD chapters do not need to be viewed in order. They can be viewed in accordance with the preference or interest of the participants. Before viewing each DVD segment, use the *Discussion Questions* in the accompanying handbook chapter to discuss the theme. Watch the DVD segment. After viewing, use the *Discussion Questions* to explore the theme in depth. Try to make connections between what you see in the DVD and your own experiences. The selected activities can be spread throughout the day.

If you are educators, we also recommend the following:

- Obtain a copy of the in-class activity provided in the resource book for each chapter addressed in the workshop.
- Discuss how you could implement the activity.
- Choose three or four *Personal Reflection Activities* to complete at the end of the workshop.

Summary of Activities: Educators

Language

1. Communicate if You Can To experience what it is like when you cannot make yourself understood.	p. 39	Partner 30 minutes
2. The Many Varieties of English To become aware that the varieties of English spoken at home may differ from the English spoken at school.	pp. 40-41	Individual/Group 20 minutes
3. Taking Action To learn more about information and resources available to help you communicate and build stronger relationships with parents.	pp. 42-45	In-School One week
4. Creating Language-Friendly Resources To create a list of suggestions to help modify school-related language so that it is more easily understood by immigrant families.	pp. 46-48	Individual/Group 30 minutes
5. Personal Reflection To assess how open and welcoming your school is to newcomer parents.	pp. 49-50	Individual 15 minutes

Cultural Understanding

1. Culture Circles To gain a better understanding of differences and similarities between cultures.	pp. 64-66	Group 30 minutes
2. What Would You Do? To help educators understand how to be culturally sensitive and help students feel proud of their cultural heritage.	pp. 67-68	Individual/Group 30 minutes
3. Personal Reflection To reflect on different cultural behaviours present in the classroom and how to support your students' cultural adjustment.	pp. 69-71	Individual 30 minutes

Communication

1. Bla-bla-bla To experience miscommunication and identify resources and strategies to ensure effective communication.	p. 86	Group 20-30 minutes
2. Types of Communication with Parents To observe how educators at your school communicate with parents.	pp. 87-89	In-School Two weeks
3. Personal Reflection To reflect on how you communicate with parents from low-voice communities.	pp. 90-91	Individual 20-30 minutes

Relationship Building

1. A Vision for Effective Parent-Teacher Relationships To create a vision for effective parent-teacher relationships.	pp. 104-106	Group 45-60 minutes
2. Assessing School Culture To assess the culture of your school and identify strategies to improve your school's accessibility and openness to parents.	pp. 107–109	In-School Variable
3. Personal Reflection To create belief statements that express your goals for an effective parent-teacher relationship.	pp. 110-111	Individual 30 minutes

The Roles of Schools and Families

Information for Parents

Summary of Activities: Parents and Caregivers

Language

What are My Options? To understand the different resources you have available to help you communicate with your child's school.	pp. 52-53	20 minutes

Cultural Understanding

Canadian Dreams and Nightmares To express your hopes and concerns for your child's future.	pp. 73-75	15-30 minutes
How Culturally Sensitive is Your Child's School? To determine if your child's school shows cultural sensitivity and awareness.	pp. 76-77	15 minutes

Communication

Strategies for Communicating with School Personnel To identify strategies to improve communication with school personnel.	pp. 93-94	20-30 minutes

Relationship Building

Improving Parent-Teacher Relationships To identify strategies to help improve your relationship with your child's educator.	pp. 113-114	30-45 minutes

The Roles of Schools and Families

Understanding the Roles of Teachers and Parents To determine what strategies you have tried and what strategies are available to you in establishing communication with your child's teacher.	pp. 133-134	15-20 minutes

Information to Parents

Becoming Informed To identify strategies that will help you get information and stay informed about your child's schooling and education.	pp. 152-153	15-30 minutes

Introduction

Ranya Khan

Introduction

Why Build a Relationship Between the School and the Family?

In North America, family involvement is considered an essential component of successful schooling for students. Family involvement initiatives can be demanding for both the school and the family, yet the benefits of successful programs make such initiatives worthwhile. When the family is involved in their child's schooling, the hihe/sher academic achievement improves, absenteeism is reduced, teacher efficacy improves, and the child is more confident and better behaved (Fine, 1993; Lawson, 2003). Family involvement programs enable educators and the family to work toward a shared goal that benefits the child.

What is Family Involvement?

Family involvement is not a clearly defined term and is often contextually determined. Usually schools define family involvement and determine how and to what extent parents and caregivers participate in school-related activities. Problems arise when the school's and family's perceptions of the meanings and functions of family involvement are different. Joyce Epstein's (1986) typology of family involvement categorizes six forms of parent involvement. Furthermore, she emphasizes that effective family involvement is largely a collaborative partnership between the family, the school, and the community.

Epstein's (1986) typology can be summarized as follows:

1. *Providing for the child's basic needs*
Each family has a 'basic obligation' to support its child's education by developing parenting skills and by providing a home environment that is conducive to learning.

2. *Communicating with school staff*
Schools have an obligation to communicate openly and regularly with families about school programs and curricula and about the child's progress.

3. *Volunteering or providing assistance at their child's school*
Family members can become partners with the school by volunteering in classrooms or school activities and by taking part as audiences during such activities.

4. *Supporting and participating with their children in learning activities at home*
Families can be involved by organizing regular learning activities at home.

5. *Participating in governance and advocacy activities*
Governance and advocacy refer to the way in which parents and the community can influence decision-making in a school system. Governance activities include school-appointed advisory committees, and advocacy activities are conducted independent of the school (e.g., a citizens' group formed to lobby curriculum changes).

6. *Collaborating with the community to meet the needs of children*
Schools can collaborate with community groups and service providers who support families and children (e.g., settlement workers).

Epstein (1986) cautions that not all types of involvement lead directly or quickly to achievement gains for students and not all types of involvement are feasible or possible for all families. This is particularly true for newcomer immigrant and refugee families who are not able to participate in governance or advocacy activities so soon after their arrival in a new environment. Schools and teachers need to have clear and realistic expectations regarding the level of involvement that different families are able to engage in. Similarly, they must recognize time constraints and resources that are at the families' disposal.

What are the Different Forms of Family Involvement Activities?

Family involvement initiatives encompass a range of activities, serve various functions, and vary in their degree of effectiveness and overall success in achieving the objective of involving the family in their child's schooling. According to Epstein (1986) the most effective forms of involvement are those that are least expensive and least public. Epstein promotes activities that contribute to the child's learning at home, such as supporting good homework practices and talking to the child about school. According to Epstein, such family involvement activities allow all parents to participate in their child's schooling and strengthen the connection between the home and the school.

Delgado-Gaitan (1991) describes conventional activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, and less conventional activities, such as involving preschool children's families in bilingual activities. Delgado-Gaitan explains that for both conventional and less conventional activities, it is essential for schools to inform families about the school and how it functions, and to maintain a continual dialogue with families that support the schools in their efforts to participate in the children's schooling.

In comparing conventional and less conventional family involvement activities, Delgado-Gaitan (1991) found conventional types of family involvement activities to represent a domination of power on the part of the school in their attempt to make the family conform to the school. Conversely, less conventional family involvement activities represent an attempt by the school to share power with the families and to include families' agendas in decision-making about programs, policies, and practices related to the education of their children.

The context of the activities is essential for families who are normally underrepresented in parent-school initiatives. Schools have more success in involving families in less conventional activities that validate the parents' social and cultural experiences. This allows "…parents to feel a part of and be active in their children's schooling, thus becoming empowered" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p. 42).

Lawson (2003) explains that teachers feel a lack of ownership over many family involvement programs and policies, which in turn results in their hesitancy to become involved in family-school partnerships. According to Lawson, teachers are eager and willing to participate in reform initiatives and support change in the school. However, because they are not included in the planning of programs in which they are expected to participate, they do not believe that real change in the school can result from such initiatives. Thus, the school needs to include the voices of all stakeholders, and work towards true collaboration at all stages of the family-school initiative. Lawson also emphasizes the importance of positive role construction for families that encourage involvement.

Lawson (2003) cites Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) , who suggest that the following conditions and preconditions are necessary to successfully involve families in their children's schooling:

> (a) parents have developed a parental role construction that is affirming to parent involvement in education, (b) parents have a positive sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed, and (c) parents perceive positive opportunities and invitations to become involved in their children's school (p. 124).

Without these conditions, families will not believe that their engagement in the school will result in positive outcomes for their children. Nor will they feel that the school is genuine in its invitation to involve them (Lawson, 2003).

What Factors Limit Parent Involvement?

There are various reasons why parents appear to be uninvolved in their child's schooling and education. Four factors will be addressed here: 1) socioeconomic status, 2) race, 3) ethnicity, and 4) English proficiency.

Socioeconomic status

Lawson (2003) elaborates to explain how family involvement is both a limiting and a limited concept in low income, ethno-culturally diverse school communities, where the level of family involvement is dependent on the family's race, ethnicity, social class affiliations, and the school's expectations of families. Researchers have suggested that low parent involvement of low-income families is the result of families prioritizing their needs, with the fulfillment of basic needs taking precedence over additional involvement activities (Lawson, 2003).

According to Lawson (2003) many schools have significantly lower expectations of low-income parents as compared to middle and high-income parents for participation in family-school initiatives. A school with low expectations of family involvement will have a low level of involvement by parents. Conversely, a school that values parent involvement and has high expectations for parents to engage in home-school activities will have high family involvement.

Gill Crozier (1999a) contends that family involvement becomes ineffective when teachers adopt the same strategies for promoting family involvement irrespective of socioeconomic status, parental needs, and individual differences. Crozier explains that by not taking account of differences, the school remains inaccessible to some families and in particular to low-income, working-class families. Crozier's research demonstrates that working-class parents are committed to their children's achieving educational success. However, working-class parents in Crozier's study viewed the school as separate from their everyday social and cultural worlds, with some parents recognizing a division of class between themselves and their children's teacher.

Many working-class parents in Crozier's (1999a) study deferred to the teacher's knowledge, feeling that their child's teacher was in a better position to make decisions about the education of their child. Parents in Crozier's study expressed feeling powerless to advocate on behalf of their children and did not regard their knowledge as valuable in influencing the school in any particular way. Margaret Finders and Cynthia Lewis (1994) explain how educators neglect to consider how a parent's own school experiences may influence school interactions and relationships. Finders and Lewis contend that parents who dropped out of school or have limited schooling lack confidence in school settings, with many such parents being low-income and working class.

Race

In addition to socioeconomic status impacting family involvement in the schools, race also plays an important role in framing the terms of the family-school relationship. In their case study, Annette Lareau and Erin McNamara Horvat's (1999) found that it is more difficult for black parents than for white parents to comply with the institutional standards of schools. They argue that this occurs because the black parents in their study did not possess the cultural and social resources of interaction to communicate with their children's teachers, who were predominantly white and middle-class. Lareau and McNamara Horvat found that white parents were more easily able to create a relationship with the school, and thus were in a privileged position to advocate on behalf of their child. Lareau and McNamara Horvat explain the privilege that being white has in regards to parent involvement. They write,

> In the case of parental involvement in white dominant schooling, being white is an advantage. Whiteness represents a largely hidden cultural resource that facilitates white parents' compliance with the standard of deferential and positive parental involvement in school. Even when white parents approach the school with suspicion and hostility, they are spared the concern over historically recognized patterns of racial discrimination of black children in schools (p. 46).

Crozier (2001) supports Lareau and McNamara Horvat's (1999) argument that being white is a hidden cultural resource. White parents are in a privileged position to not only access social and cultural capital, but to voice their opinions without questioning whether racism is a mitigating factor in the school's response to their concerns, questions, and overall relationship.

Ethnicity
Concha Delgado-Gaitan (1991) explains that in addition to race, ethno-cultural diversity of minority groups can affect family involvement in schools, with families from minority ethno-cultural groups feeling shut out from participating in family involvement activities because they do not possess the specific cultural knowledge that is required. Delgado-Gaitan asserts that for students from cultures and social groups that differ from the white mainstream group, schooling becomes a discontinuous process because of language, values, and practice differences. According to Delgado-Gaitan, schools facilitate the exclusion of minority families and students by establishing activities that require specific majority culturally-based knowledge and behaviours about the school. Moreover, schools do not provide families with access to the socio-cultural knowledge that would encourage their participation in formal school activities. This is especially true for new immigrants who have a low level of English proficiency.

English proficiency
Finders and Lewis (1994) describe how families with low English skills feel inadequate in school contexts and avoid attending all school-related activities because of the cultural discomfort experienced when having to communicate with teachers and English-speaking parents. Rebecca Huss-Keeler's (1997) ethnographic study of Pakistani English as a Second Language (ESL) parents in Britain revealed that the parents demonstrated an interest in their child's education in a culturally different way than did middle class native English speaking parents. According to the researchers, this difference resulted in teachers misinterpreting the parents behaviours as indicating a lack of interest in their child's learning.

The parents in Huss-Keeler's (1997) study did not possess the linguistic proficiency or social and cultural capital to communicate with their children's teachers in a way that the teachers deemed effective. The parents who spoke English and came to the school regularly had the most access to their child's teachers, and were perceived by the school as interested and involved in their child's education. Conversely, parents with low levels of English who were hesitant to go to the school were viewed as disinterested in their child's learning. The teachers in Huss-Keeler's study had a narrow definition of literacy and were not aware of the various literacy practices in the home that were supporting the children's learning. Furthermore, the children of ESL parents were not afforded the same opportunities or access to educational initiatives because the teachers perceived their parents' low school involvement as indicative of the child's inability to succeed academically.

What about the Family's Knowledge?

Kimberly Daniel-White (2002) explores how a narrow definition of what it means to be involved in school can lead to school-defined perceptions of what it means to be a "good" and involved parent. Daniel-White (2002) explains how the historic definition of family involvement meant parents engaging in more school-like activities at home, such as reading to children, helping them with their homework, and buying educational materials such as flashcards to use at home. Through this definition families were called upon to take on the role of being their children's teacher at home. Families who did not

take on this responsibility were viewed by the school as negligent and uncaring (Daniel-White, 2002).

To rectify this problem, some schools implement programs that teach families how they should interact with their children. Daniel-White (2002) describes how such programs take a cultural deficit approach to families, especially those belonging to cultural and linguistic minorities, by not recognizing or valuing the families' interactional patterns with their children. Family involvement that does not conform to the school's expectations is ignored and regarded as irrelevant. As a result, the family's cultural values and practices are diminished. According to Daniel-White (2002), schools "…see parents as entities that need to be fixed for the benefit of their children…parents' own interactional patterns are not valued, and they are taught to interact with their children in ways that are not valued by their home cultures" (p. 31).

This definition of family involvement disregards the knowledge that parents possess, and discounts the idea that learning can occur outside of the school. Daniel-White (2002) cites Auerbach (1989) and Gonzalez et al. (1995) to explain how the funds of knowledge paradigm and social-contextual models proposed by these researchers are alternatives to the cultural deficit model of parent involvement.

Through the social-contextual approach and funds of knowledge paradigm, educators can empower families in their home activities rather than make them feel as though they are inferior. Auerbach (1989) describes the socio-contextual approach to family literacy as a model that promotes activities that are congruent with the literacy needs and goals of families. The author asserts that a broader definition of family literacy is needed to include a range of activities and practices that are integrated into the fabric of daily life (Daniel-White, 2002).

Similar to the socio-contextual approach, the funds of knowledge paradigm expands the definition of family involvement (Daniel-White, 2002). Daniel-White cites Gonzalez et al. (1995), who explain that funds of knowledge "…refers to those historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well being" (p. 35).

Thus, both models view the home as an important resource that can support school-related academic efforts, and value a family's knowledge as important regardless of whether or not the knowledge found in the home replicates the knowledge found in the school. A broader, more inclusive definition of family involvement more fully encapsulates Epstein's (1986) argument that effective family involvement requires collaborative partnerships in which the school acknowledges and respects the home cultures and the contributions made by all families.

What are Some Other Obstacles to Collaborative Partnerships?

Although collaborative partnerships are worthwhile endeavours, family involvement activities are not always truly collaborative. Michael Lawson (2003) asserts that families and teachers must have similar and compatible meanings and functions of family

involvement in order for there to be a true partnership between the home and the school. Misunderstandings and conflicts loom when teachers and families have different, and at times competing, perceptions of the meanings and functions of family involvement.

Lawson (2003) explains that most family involvement activities are school-centric, and are thereby structured and defined for families by schools. Lawson (2003) uncovers how school-centric definitions of family involvement further disconnect the home and school environment. Lawson argues that this divide occurs because for many families the orientations for involvement start in the community and move into the school. The dominant school-centric model, on the other hand, begins at the school and then branches out to the child's home environment.

The underlying goals of the family involvement activities are questioned when they lack relevance to the lives of students and parents, which may result in conflicts between families and teachers. According to Lawson (2003), when negative parent-teacher interactions occur, children associate family involvement with an indication of negative student behaviour. In such a case, the disciplinary role of the parents takes precedence over any other contributions to their children's learning. The result is children not wanting their parents to be involved with the school.

The barriers that exist between families and teachers become even more impenetrable when teachers feel as though their professionalism is being challenged (Crozier, 1999a, 1999b). Crozier (1999b) interviewed teachers in the United Kingdom about their views of family involvement and found that teachers regarded middle-class parents as being more involved than low-income parents. However, the teachers also felt that family involvement infringed on their professionalism and questioned the lay-professional divide that teachers wanted to maintain. The teachers in Crozier's study wanted parents to respect their authority in subject knowledge and pedagogy. Consequently, teachers preferred the compliance of low-income working-class parents who did not interfere or question their professional judgment. However, the same teachers viewed the low-income and working class parents' compliance as a sign that these parents were uninterested in their children's schooling and were indifferent to family involvement (Crozier, 1999b). The possibility exists that some teachers may want to maintain a professional distance from their students' families and may therefore prefer families who are not overly involved in their child's schooling to avoid an infringement on their academic judgment.

What Does a Successful Family-School Partnership Look Like?

The term partnership connotes a relationship based on equality in power as well as in access to resources. Yet this is not the case for many family-school relationships. Despite the benefits reaped from family involvement activities, many home-school initiatives are created for families who have specific characteristics. As a result, unique attributes of families are disregarded, leaving many families excluded from feeling comfortable and capable of engaging in family involvement activities. Michael Lawson (2003) explains

that there exist "…assumptions, selectivities, contingencies, and silences that may undergird school-centric parent involvement practices and activities" (p. 80).

Finders and Lewis (1994) identify specific conditions that are necessary for successful family-school partnerships, including the importance for schools to clarify to families their role in family involvement activities and the reasons why it is essential. Families also need to know their rights as participants in their child's education, the most important of which is the right to advocate on behalf of their child.

Developing trust and establishing a personal relationship with families is also necessary for successful family involvement activities, as it diminishes the fear and intimidation that many families have in new and unfamiliar school settings (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Furthermore, schools need to utilize families' expertise and assess their funds of knowledge to confirm to parents that they can contribute to the development of their children's learning.

References

Crozier, G. (2001). Excluded parents: The deracialisation of parental involvement. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 4(4), 329-341.

Crozier, G. (1999a). Is it a case of 'We know when we're not wanted'? The parents' perspective on parent-teacher roles and relationships. *Educational Research*, 41(3), 315-328.

Crozier, G. (1999b). Parents and schools: Partnership or surveillance? *Journal of Education Policy*, 13(1), 125-136.

Daniel-White, K. (2002). Reassessing parent involvement: Involving language minority parents in school work at home. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 18(1), 29-49.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*, 100(1), 20-46.

Epstein, J. L. (1986). Parent involvement: Implications for limited English proficient parents. In C. Simich-Dudgeon (Ed.), *Issues of parent involvement*. Proceedings of symposium held at Trinity College, Washington, D.C.

Finders, M. & Lewis, C. (1994). "Why some parents don't come to school". *Educational Leadership*, 51(8), 50-54.

Fine, M. (1993). [Ap]parent involvement: Reflections on parents, power, and urban public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 94(4), 682-729.

Huss-Keeler, R. L. (1997). Teacher perception of ethnic and linguistic minority parental involvement and its relationship to children's language and literacy learning: A case study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(2), 171-182.

Lareau, A. & McNamara Horvat, E. (1999). Moments of social inclusion and exclusion race, class and cultural capital in family-school relationships. *Sociology of Education*, 72(1), 37-53.

Lawson, M. A. (2003). School-Family relations in context: Parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement. *Urban Education*, 38(1), 77-133.

Language

Jolanta Garus & Ranya Khan

"Not speaking the language does not mean that we are not educated. Even if you have the best idea in the world, but are not able to communicate, it is a problem. So I think communication barriers were the most difficult barriers"
(Somali-speaking parent)

Language

Background

Every year, the Toronto region welcomes half of all immigrants who arrive in Canada. In the city of Toronto, about one in four of all children aged five to 16 were immigrants who arrived in the 1990s; in Markham, Richmond Hill, and Mississauga, newcomers make up about one-fifth of the school aged population (Statistics Canada, 2006). Therefore, it seems natural that the most common barrier immigrants and their children face in establishing themselves in Canada is that of language and culture. This barrier carries through in all areas of a newcomer's life, including the school.

Research suggests that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students' attitudes (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Olmstead & Rubin, 1982). However, some parents find it difficult to become involved in their children's schooling when they are not proficient in the language that is spoken in the school. Therefore, notices, report cards and parent-teacher interviews all become obstacles for parents rather than useful ways to keep them informed about their children's school and education. Teachers of immigrant children, as well as the newcomer parents themselves, no matter where they are from, find that language can create a challenge when it comes to parental involvement in schools.

In some cases, immigrant parents rely on their children to translate and interpret for them. These children are often referred to as language brokers, and are expected to assist their parents in complex and "adult-like situations" (McQuillan & Tse, 1995, Tse, 1996). It has been argued that such a technique can be detrimental to parent-teacher communication and to communication with the child. For example, when information is being sent from or to the school, the children may report only what they believe is relevant. As well, child language brokers may become overwhelmed by their responsibilities of translating, thus affecting academic achievement (Tse, 1996). Some parents are concerned that their children will lose respect for their authority and not view them as competent caregivers who can advocate on their behalf.

Teachers and school administrators try to communicate with and involve parents in the school community through a variety of techniques such as parent-teacher interviews, volunteering, and special events. However, many immigrant parents are hesitant to enter their children's school because they are not confident that they will have the linguistic skills and confidence to communicate with the various school personnel that they may encounter. As a result, having school information translated or interpreted into the language that the parents understand gives the parents access to critical information about their children's education.

Strategies for Dealing with Language Barriers

The use of translated materials and interpretation

- Ask bilingual parents for feedback about translated materials. Sometimes the translation may not be correct or may convey misinformation.
- Translate important signs, such as rules, procedures, and directions in the school into a variety of languages. Use graphics whenever possible. Graphics such as pictures, arrows, and other indicators are easier to understand than text for parents who lack alphabetic literacy.
- Avoid using educational jargon in your outgoing messages. Avoid using acronyms.
- Use bilingual staff to help you interpret or translate. However, it's important to note that the interpreting role needs to be properly recognized and rewarded. Furthermore, it is important that staff be provided with professional development opportunities to make sure they are properly trained (Martin-Jones & Saxena, 1995).
- Be aware of whom you ask to be an interpreter. Just because they speak the same language does not mean they are appropriate. In a British study, it was found that a number of Bangladeshi women initially refused to participate when an eighteen-year-old interpreter approached them. Once an older, married woman was found, they were more responsive (Blackledge, 2000).

Staffing and resources

- Attempt to hire teaching staff that represent the communities and cultures of the school population.
- Stock the library with multilingual and dual language books. Encourage students and family members to come to the library and borrow books.
- Utilize the services provided by settlement workers as much as possible.
- Have signage in all major languages to create a welcoming environment for people of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- Arrange for students to create bilingual newsletters and pamphlets describing the school and its events.
- Utilize websites including online translation sites.

Communication

- The more familiarity and contact you have with families, the more trust is developed Trust allows a relationship to grow.
- If you are having trouble communicating with family members, stay relaxed and respectful.
- Do not lose your temper. You will gain more respect if you demonstrate quiet but firm authority and knowledge.

Annotated Bibliography

Ahearn, C., Childs-Bowen, D., Coady, M., Dickson, K., Heintz, C., Hughes, K., et al. (2002). *The diversity kit: An introductory resource for social change in education*. Retrieved January 22, 2007 from The Education Alliance at Brown University, Teaching Diverse Learners Web site: http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/diversity_ kit/index.shtml

Part two of the *Diversity Kit*, entitled "Culture" highlights the importance of the teacher's awareness of the student's culture and cultural identity. The fourth chapter in this section entitled "Culture, Family, and Community" explores how to cultivate collaboration with families and communities in order to support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Blackledge, A. (2000). *Literacy, power and social justice*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Ltd.

This book discusses the importance of community language literacies in the lives of immigrant learners and their parents. Blackledge shows how full literacy can be achieved for minority language communities and brings together examples of good practice and recent research.

Flaitz, J. (2006). *Understanding your refugee and immigrant students: An educational, cultural, and linguistic guide*. Jackson TN: University of Michigan Press.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first one occupies almost two thirds of the book and focuses on the educational and cultural backgrounds of Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Egypt, Haiti, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, People's Republic of China, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The second part provides some detail about the linguistic features of the languages adopted in these countries.

Henderson, A. T., & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. St. Louis, MO: Danforth Foundation and Flint, MI: Mott (C. S.) Foundation.

This report presents a collection of research papers on the function and importance of family to a student's achievement and education in school and the community. The research is divided into two categories: (1) studies on programs and interventions from early childhood through high school, including school policy and (2) studies on family processes.

Hints on working with new arrival refugee immigrant families at your library. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2006 from http://www.kcls.org/clc/APP%20C-44%20Hints%20on%20working%20with%20new%20arrival.pdf

This document was created by the King Country Library System for librarians. However, its content is useful for educators as it provides multiple strategies to prepare them to welcome and communicate with new arrival refugee immigrant families.

Illinois State Board of Education. (2003). *Involving immigrant and refugee families in their children's schools: Barriers, challenges, and successful strategies.* Retrieved January 16, 2007 from http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/involving_families.pdf

This report, written in 2003, represents effective strategies to assist schools to reach out to refugee and other immigrant parents.

Martin-Jones, M., & Saxena, M. (1995). Supporting or containing bilingualism? Policies, power asymmetries, and pedagogic practices in mainstream primary classrooms. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Power and inequality in language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In *Power and Inequality in Language Education*, Tollefson assembles the work of twelve scholars who explore the relationship between language policy, wealth, and power. Their original research demonstrates how language planning and education reflect existing inequalities in the distribution of economic, political, and social power, and how language policy is used to obtain and maintain power.

McQuillan, J., & Tse, L. (1995). Child language brokering in linguistic minority communities: Effects on cultural interaction, cognition, and literacy. *Language and Education,* 9(3), 195-215.

This study examines the contexts of cultural interaction and the development of cognition and language among language minority children who brokered for their limited-English-speaking parents. Nine research participants who brokered for their parents as children were interviewed to determine the effects of brokering.

Olmstead, P. P., & Rubin, R. I. (1982). Linking parent behaviours to child achievement: Four evaluation studies from the parent education follow-through programs. *Studies in Educational Evaluation,* 8(3), 317-325.

Four evaluation studies concerning the relationship between parent behaviours/attitudes and child achievement are presented. In each study, parental data were obtained either by direct observation or through lengthy face-to-face interviews. In all four studies, significant relationships were found between parental measures and child achievement.

Settlement.Org. (2007, January 18). *Education*. Retrieved from http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/

The Education section of the Settlement.Org website provides valuable information for both educators and families. Information includes how to get a translator, procedures for enrolling children in school, links to information on where to go to improve English skills for parents, and a copy of the "Newcomers' Guide to Education in Ontario."

Statistics Canada. (2007, January 20). http://www.statscan.ca

Provides information such as community profiles, census data, summary tables, geographic data, and publications.

Toronto City Summit Alliance. (2007, January 12). *Issues facing our city: Economic integration of immigrant families*. Retrieved from http://www.torontoalliance.ca/urban_challenges/economic_integration

This article is an important read for educators as it draws attention to some of the issues immigrant families face upon arriving in Canada. Specifically, this article addresses the barriers skilled immigrants face when trying to attain suitable employment that matches their qualifications.

Tse, L. (1996). Language brokering in linguistic minority communities: The case of Chinese- and Vietnamese-American students. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 20(3/4), 485-498.

The purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence of language brokering among Chinese- and Vietnamese-American bilingual studentsand to explore the linguistic, cultural, and affective factors associated with brokering. The results suggest that nearly all of the research participants brokered for a variety of people in the home and at school, among many other settings, and that brokering has a number of affective and linguistic consequences for language minority students.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on language addresses the following topics:

- Parents' views on the language barrier
- Immigrant families' experiences accessing information about their children's schooling
- The school's role in helping parents understand the language of the school
- The role of the settlement worker
- Strategies to overcome language barriers

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What languages are spoken in the homes of your students?
- What resources are available to help parents to become proficient in the language used by the school community? How are these resources made accessible to parents?
- What community organizations exist in the school neighbourhood to assist newcomer families settle into their new environment?
- Who has access to translated materials (newsletters, school policies, classroom books, etc.)?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- How can school personnel establish and maintain communication with parents who are not proficient in the language used by the school?
- What can you do to ensure parents are receiving the appropriate information at all times?
- Is there an atmosphere of trust and approachability that encourages open lines of communication between you/your school and students' parents?
- What types of classroom activities can students take part in to help their parents with a low level of proficiency in English?

Activity 1: Communicate if You Can[1]

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, paper

Objective: To experience what it is like when you cannot make yourselves understood.

Procedure:
- Choose a partner. Try to choose someone you do not know very well.
- One of you is Partner A. The other is Partner B. Decide who is who.
- You are not allowed to speak aloud.
- Partner A: Think of an important fact about yourself that Partner B would not likely know. Do not share your fact. Try to communicate your message using gestures or drawings. Do not write words or numbers.
- Partner B: Write down what you think the message is that Partner A is trying to show you. Do not use any gestures or ask Partner A any questions about the message. Make sure Partner A does not see what you are writing down.
- Write how you felt during this exercise. Partner A: Write about how you felt when you were trying to convey your message without using any verbal language. Partner B: Write about how you felt while trying to interpret the message.

Discussion:
- Join the rest of the participants in your group.
- Partner Bs: Read your interpretation of the message. Partner A: Tell the group the real message. Do this until all partners have presented.
- Partner Bs: share with the group how you felt while trying to interpret the message.
    - How did you feel when trying to interpret your partner's message?
    - What strategies could you have used to help Partner A better relay the message?
- Partner As share with the group how you felt when trying to convey the message.
    - Did you feel frustrated or helpless?
- How could this activity help you relate to parents who lack proficiency in English?

Ideas for messages are: During my vacation I went to… A strange thing happened in my class the other day… It makes me laugh when…

[1] This activity was adapted from the *Communication Game*. The original activity can be viewed at: http://www.everythingesl.net/downloads/communication_game.pdf

Activity 2: The Many Varieties of English

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "What is English?" handout

Objectives: To stimulate your thinking about what Standard English is. To create an awareness that some students communicate in a version of English at home that is different from the Standard North American English that is most often spoken in Canadian schools.

Procedure: Raise your hand if you are fully proficient in English. Take a look at the "What is English" handout. These are examples of an English Creole that is spoken in Trinidad and Tobago. What do you think the meaning of these words and phrases is?

Answer Key: What is English?

English Creole	Standard North American English
1. Yuk expekin ah flood or wha?	Aren't your pants too short?
2. Boy stop flingin meh grip so.	Don't throw my luggage like that.
3. Yute-man, fly de bonnet nuh!	John, lift the hood of the car.
4. Meh belly gripin meh.	I have a stomach ache.
5. He doh have no broughtupcy.	He doesn't have any manners.
6. AH! You still alive gyul?	Girl, I haven't seen you in a long time.

Discussion:

- How would you define "Standard English?
- How can you find out about the languages spoken at home by your students and their families?
- How might the language spoken at school be different from the language spoken at home, even for those families who are proficient in English?
- How might the difference between the variety of English used at home and that used in the school affect students and families when communicating with school personnel?

What is English?

What do you think the meaning of these phrases and words of English Creole spoken in Trinidad and Tobago are?

Write your translation in Standard North American English (SNAE) in the space provided.

English Creole	Standard North American English
1. Yuk expekin ah flood or wha?	
2. Boy stop flingin meh grip so.	
3. Yute-man, fly de bonnet nuh!	
4. Meh belly gripin meh.	
5. He doh have no broughtupcy.	
6. AH! You still alive gyul?	

Discussion:

- How would you define "Standard English?
- How can you find out about the languages spoken at home by your students and their families?
- How might the language spoken at school be different from the language spoken at home, even for those families who are proficient in English?
- How might the difference between the variety of English used at home and that used in the school affect students and families when communicating with school personnel?

Activity 3: Taking Action

Time: 30 minutes for reading and discussion, one week for action plan

Materials: Pen/pencil, "My First Year Teaching" and "Action Plan" handouts

Objectives: To discuss issues surrounding language barriers parents face from a teacher's perspective. To complete action research to try to find out more about resources available to help you communicate and build stronger relationships with parents.

Procedure: Read the story "My First Year Teaching." Discuss the questions below. Complete the "Action Plan" project with a partner. Meet after one week and discuss . the resources and information you collected with the group. Create a resource binder filled with all your resources to be used in your school.

Discussion:

- Have you ever had a similar experience to the one that the new teacher in the story described? If so, please share your story.
- What are some additional strategies and resources the new teacher could have used to communicate with her students' families?
- If language is a barrier in communicating with your students' families, what could you do?
- What are some other issues you have encountered in trying to communicate with parents?
- What did you think of Mark's suggestions?
- Do you think the strategies presented in this scenario could work in your school? Why or why not?
- Can you think of other suggestions that could work in your school?

My First Year Teaching

Read the following story written by a new teacher and discuss the questions that follow.

I just started my first year teaching, and I am really excited about my new fourth grade class. The students are amazing and are all very different in terms of personality and culture. In fact, I have 13 different languages represented in my one class alone! I really want to build relationships with my students' families but I'm finding it difficult to get in touch with some of the parents to talk about how their children are progressing in class.

I've tried to send notices, but I'm not sure whether they are reading them. I've also phoned a few parents, but I just end up talking to either one of my students or an older brother or sister. Actually, at the parent-teacher interviews, one of my students came along and translated everything. They are great students, but how am I supposed to know if they are really translating everything?

Initially, I was too nervous to talk to anyone about this, but I decided to talk to Mark, a teacher with more experience. I had always heard that his class was just as diverse as mine, and thought that he might have some good tips for me. He made me feel much better when he said that he had similar experiences with his students' families. Mark ended up giving me some great tips!

First, he mentioned that I need to find out exactly what languages my students speak at home with their parents. The more I know about them, the easier it will be to help. Second, Mark suggested that I contact the SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools) representative assigned to our school. The SWIS worker assigned to assist newcomer families in our school is multilingual and well-versed in how schools and families can effectively communicate with one another. Mark also told me to look at some of the resources that have been developed by different provincial and federal agencies. One resource that he directed me to is "A Newcomers' Guide to Education in Ontario," online at www.settlement.org/edguide. This resource has a series of handouts on key school topics in 18 different languages!

He also told me about Christine, a fellow teacher, who is Chinese-Canadian. According to Mark, Christine is fluent in Mandarin and has done some translating for a few of the teachers when they needed to meet with Mandarin-speaking parents. I never even thought of asking anyone in our school to do that. Another piece of advice Mark gave me was to try to get some of the parents to come in for a cultural night so they can meet more people who speak the same language. This way parents can meet, build relationships, and learn from each other about the school and its practices and policies.

I am curious to see if these approaches work just as well for me.

Discussion:

- Have you ever had a similar experience to the one that the new teacher in the story described? If so, please share your story.
- What are some additional strategies and resources the new teacher could have used to communicate with her students' families?
- If language is a barrier in communicating with your students' families, what could you do?
- What are some other issues you have encountered in trying to communicate with parents?
- What did you think of Mark's suggestions?
- Do you think the strategies presented in this scenario could work in your school? Why or why not?
- Can you think of other suggestions that could work in your school?

Action Plan

Become an action researcher! In pairs or individually, find out what languages your students and families speak. What resources can you find about in these languages? Look in your local library or browse the Internet to see what is available.

What resources are available within the school community that you can utilize to learn more about the languages of your students and how you can better communicate with your students' families?

Think of some of the human resources that you already know about in your school setting – bilingual teachers/parents, settlement workers – and build on these relationships. Ask them about language resources that they may know of and any ideas they may have to create stronger ties of communication.

Meet back together in a week to discuss your findings.

Create a school resource binder with all of the information you discovered so everyone can take advantage of the information.

Activity 4: Creating Language-Friendly Resources

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "A Language-Friendly School" worksheet

Objective: To create a list of suggestions to help modify school-related language so that it is more easily understood by immigrant families.

Procedure: Complete the "A Language-Friendly School" worksheet individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Sample answers have been provided.

A Language-Friendly School

This worksheet lists common approaches used by schools to get parents involved in the education of their children.

Individually, in pairs, or in small groups, try to think of practical suggestions to modify the approach to help parents who have low levels of proficiency in English.

Common approaches to parent involvement	**Suggestions to modify approaches to make them more easily understood by English language learners**
School to home communication -newsletters -notices -report cards	
Volunteer opportunities	
Parent teacher conferences	
School wide events	

Sample Answers: A Language-Friendly School

Common approaches to parent involvement	**Suggestions to modify approaches to make them more easily understood by English language learners**
School to home communication -newsletters -notices -report cards	• Flyers and newsletters are often the least effective means of communication. Be as personal as possible. Face-to-face contact is always easier because some parents may not be literate in their first language. • Recruit bilingual parent volunteers through a school newsletter (with a survey to identify potential volunteers). They can help with phone calls and other contacts with parents who speak little or no English. • Use simple printed or typed messages on flyers. Try to avoid cursive writing, as it's not always taught in other countries.
Volunteer opportunities	• Try the "bridge parents" strategy – finding one or two parents in each major language group and asking them to help reach into their own language group. Give each "bridge parent" a list of all the parents (names, phone numbers, addresses) in the district who speak their particular language and ask them to be the leader and perhaps even a translator for that group. • Contact ethnic or religious organizations such as Russian churches and Muslim community organizations to recruit bilingual volunteers to help communicate with families learning English. • Create a bilingual welcoming committee at school made up of parents, staff and community members.
Parent teacher conferences	• Find out the interpreter's schedule. Communicate that information to parents. • If you have basic information that will be shared with every parent, see if you can get it translated ahead of time so parents can have some familiar information before going in.
School wide events	• Personally invite newcomer parents to help in some way or to attend an event. At every school event share information about upcoming events, such as summer school or parent conferences.

Activity 5: Personal Reflection

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Personal Reflection" worksheet

Objective: To assess how open and welcoming your school is to newcomer parents.

Procedure: Complete the "Personal Reflection" worksheet. If you disagree with any of the statements, take some time to brainstorm how you might be able to help newcomer parents get more information.

Personal Reflection

Read the following statements. Circle *Agree, Disagree,* or *Don't know*.

1. Newcomer parents at our school know and understand our policies and school rules.

Agree Disagree Don't Know

2. Newcomer parents know and understand the different course options their children have and where these options can lead them.

Agree Disagree Don't Know

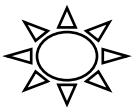
3. Newcomer parents know about the resources that our school can provide them (e.g., SWIS workers, translations, and ESL classes).

Agree Disagree Don't Know

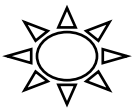
4. Our school has a variety of multilingual resources available.

Agree Disagree Don't Know

Ideas to try:



Section for Parents and Caregivers
Language



The DVD chapter on language addresses the following topics:

- Parents' views on the language barrier
- Immigrant families' experiences accessing information about their children's schooling
- The school's role in helping parents understand the language of the school
- The role of the Settlement Worker
- Strategies to overcome language barriers

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What resources are available to help you to become proficient in the language used by the school community?
- Are these resources accessible to you?
- What community organizations exist in the school neighbourhood to help you in settling into your new [school] environment?
- Do you have access to translated materials (newsletters, school policies, classroom books, etc.)?
- Do you have access to a translator?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- How might the school establish and maintain communication with parents who are not proficient in English?
- What can you do to make sure that you receive the appropriate information at all times?
- Is there an atmosphere of trust and approachability that encourages open lines of communication between you and your child's school?
- What strategies can you try to get the information you need about your child's education?

Activity: What are my Options?

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Family to Do Checklist" handout

Objective: To understand all the different options you have to help you communicate with your child's school.

Procedure: Complete the "Family to Do Checklist." Any unchecked boxes are ideas you can try in your child's school.

Family to Do Checklist

Read the strategy.

If you have tried this strategy, put an (X) in the box.

If you have not tried this strategy leave the box empty and go to the next strategy.

- ❑ Involve all family members in supporting your child's schooling. For example, an older brother or sister may read to a younger child; it would benefit both of them.
- ❑ Go to the local library and find out if there are any resources available in your language.
- ❑ Keep asking teachers and other school staff questions. Don't be afraid to ask about your child's progress, and about the curriculum, school functions, reasons for actions taken by the school, volunteering in school or at home, and any other questions that you have.
- ❑ Find someone (other than one of your children) to be an interpreter if you need to speak to a teacher or principal. If you cannot find an interpreter on your own, request one from the school.
- ❑ Get to know other parents in your child's school. Changes in the school are most likely to occur if parents act together.
- ❑ Go to the Settlement.org website to find multilingual resources about your education in Ontario - http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/

If you have an (X) in all the boxes you are aware of all your options.

If you have some empty boxes, try them the next time you get a chance.

Cultural Understanding

Ranya Khan

"Nothing makes sense! At that time, when we first arrived…because there is such a difference with our religion, and where we're from, between Pakistan and Canada, the way of life and culture, there is a big difference, and this makes it difficult. One can't understand anything!
We're thinking, where have we arrived?"
(Urdu-speaking parent)

Cultural Understanding

Background

Culture is an integral part of our identity. Our culture influences all aspects of our lives. It dictates how we interact with society and how we perceive ourselves and our surroundings. There are tangible and intangible elements to every culture. The tangible elements of culture include clothing, food, music, arts and crafts, and festivals. The intangible elements of culture include the values of the society, a person's/community's world views, and a person's/community's attitudes concerning life processes. The tangible elements are the ones that are most easily recognized and obvious to outsiders of a culture. However, these may be less important than the intangible elements that may more deeply define individuals and how the individuals perceives themselves and their role in society. The tangible elements are the external aspects of the culture, while the intangible elements are the internal aspects of the culture.

Most newcomers to Canada experience several stages of cultural adjustment. The four stages of cultural adjustment include (1) enthusiasm and excitement of being in a new country and a new culture, (2) withdrawal and loneliness mixed with feelings of isolation and homesickness, (3) re-emergence and adjustment in accepting the new culture and gaining a better understanding of the culture, and (4) achievement and a renewed enthusiasm of being in the culture as the individual feels acceptance and is able to accept aspects of the new culture. Individuals may jump from one stage to the next, or sequentially pass through each stage. The length of time at each stage varies for each individual; yet for most individuals the first year after their arrival in a new culture is the most difficult.

Many students who are new to Canada struggle to find a balance between fitting in with their new cultural surroundings and maintaining their cultural identity. Conflicts arise when the new culture and the home culture are significantly different from one another. Families might experience confusion, conflict, and helplessness over the wide disparity between what they have always believed and what they experience in the new culture. These feelings are defined as culture shock.

Symptoms of culture shock

Homesickness
Boredom
Lethargy
Withdrawal
Irritability
Hostility toward people
Irrational anger
Excessive sleeping
Depression

Stages of Cultural Adjustment

Stage One: The Honeymoon -- Enthusiasm/Excitement

The individual
- feels positive about the new culture that he or she is now in
- feels overwhelmed
- is fascinated and curious about this new culture
- is an observer and is hesitant to confront the culture

Stage Two: Hostility -- Withdrawal/Loneliness

The individual
- begins to interact with the culture
- finds the behaviour of the people unusual and unpredictable
- starts to dislike the culture
- feels anxious and uneasy about the new culture
- begins to withdraw
- starts to criticize the culture and the people

Stage Three: Humour -- Re-emergence/Adjustment

The individual
- begins to understand the behaviour of the people around him or her
- starts to feel more comfortable living in the new culture
- regains his or her sense of humour

Stage Four: Home -- Achievement/Enthusiasm

The individual
- enjoys being in the culture
- functions easily in the culture
- prefers certain cultural behaviours to that of his or herown culture
- adopts certain behaviours

Teachers' Role in the Process of Cultural Adjustment

Schools and, in particular, teachers can help with a student's cultural adjustment by creating a learning environment that is respectful of their students' cultures. This environment should allow individual students to express their views and to continue to have a voice on a range of opinions and ideas. The important role of the teacher in the acculturation process cannot be understated. Teachers help students make the difficult transition from one culture to another. Often teachers spend more time with students than parents do, and can see changes in behaviours that family members cannot or do not recognize. What happens in a student's mind and heart is a result of the drastic changes that are occurring in their lives. These occurrences have a direct influence on their ability to cope with life and succeed in school.

Teachers

- are models of appropriate behaviour. By modeling behaviour and setting limits, the teacher exemplifies acceptable behaviour.
- need to take the time to understand who their students are. Teachers need to become aware of the problems that their students are facing and the adjustments that they are making.
- need to learn more about the cultures, religions, and family patterns that profoundly influence their students. By doing so, the teacher will be better prepared to understand why and how their studentsperceive the world.
- need to learn about resources in the community,such as knowing whom to turn to when danger signals arise or when access to important information is needed.
- need to recognize that they are important members of a team and that there are many valuable resources in the community.

Annotated Bibliography

Ahearn, C., Childs-Bowen, D., Coady, M., Dickson, K., Heintz, C., Hughes, K., et al. (2002). *The Diversity Kit: An introductory resource for social change in education*. Retrieved January 22, 2007 from The Education Alliance at Brown University, Teaching Diverse Learners Web site: http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/diversity_kit/index.shtml

Part two of the *Diversity Kit*, entitled "Culture," highlights the importance of the teacher's awareness of the student's culture and cultural identity. The fourth chapter in this section, entitled "Culture, Family, and Community," explores how to cultivate collaboration with families and communities in order to support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Brown, S. & Eisterhold, J. (2004). *Topics in language and culture for teachers*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

This is an introductory language and culture text designed for pre-service teachers. The book explores the interrelationship between language and culture and the influence culture has on a person's behaviour, communication, ideas, views, and beliefs. The authors focus on the implications culture has in a classroom context.

Coelho, E. (2004). *Adding English: A guide to teaching in multilingual classrooms*. Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing.

Adding English provides a vivid and descriptive account of the social, educational, and psychological factors that surround learners and educators in multilingual classrooms. Coelho brings a sensitive and detailed perspective to a multidimensional issue that is often relegated to a unidimensional status, with language being the sole focus. This text provides educators with strategies that can be implemented in almost any classroom situation.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools: An integrated approach*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

The book outlines approaches and strategies that schools and teachers can adopt to provide educational experiences meeting the needs of all learners in culturally diverse schools and classrooms, especially those in areas in which new immigrants settle.

Corbett. J. (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

This book presents intercultural language education to English language teachers. It provides insight into how teachers can equip their students with the skills to be cultural observers, and into how to understand the cultures of other people. It also provides a guide on how to conduct and analyze interviews for cultural exploration and on the assessment of intercultural communicative competence.

DeCapua, A. & Wintergerst, A. C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*. Jackson TN: University of Michigan Press.

Topics discussed in the book include introduction to culture, more on culture, culture shock, nonverbal communication, societal roles, and pragmatics. Each of the six chapters ends with three useful sections: Questions for Study and Discussion, Practice: What Activities Show Us, and Further. The goals of this book for the teacher educator are to expand cultural awareness, to acquire an in-depth understanding of what culture is and its relationship to language, and to comprehend and implement observations of cultural similarities and differences.

Finders, M. & Lewis, C. (1994). "Why some parents don't come to school". *EducationalLeadership*, 51(8), 50-54.

Too often, parents' social, economic, linguistic, and cultural practices are represented as serious problems, rather than as valued knowledge. Some parents do not feel comfortable in the teachers' domain. Schools can help by clarifying how parents can help, encouraging them to be assertive, developing trust, building on home experience, and using parent expertise.

Flaitz, J. (2006). *Understanding your refugee and immigrant students: An educational, cultural, and linguistic guide*. Jackson TN: University of Michigan Press.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first one occupies almost two thirds of the book and focuses on the educational and cultural backgrounds of Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Egypt, Haiti, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, People's Republic of China, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The second part provides some detail about the linguistic features of the languages adopted in these countries.

Genesse, F. (1994). *Educating Second Language Children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Educating Second Language Children is based on the work of leading researchers in elementary education. Going beyond classroom instruction, Genesse addresses the role of the school, family, and community and how important they are in terms of newcomer students and a successful education.

Lange, D. L., & Paige, R. M. (Eds.), (2003). *Culture as the core: Perspectives on culture in second language learning*. Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

This book presents the issue of integrating culture into the second language classroom. The authors argue that culture is the core of language learning/acquisition.

Law, B. (2000). *The more than just surviving handbook: ESL for every classroom teacher*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Portage and Main Press.

This resource book directs educators with ideas on how to marshal their wealth of pedagogical knowledge and skills and the resources of the school and community to assist ESL students "more than just survive" in Canadian schools.

Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education, and staff development.* Washington, DC: Teaching for Change.

This textbook contains classroom lesson plans, staff development activities, reflections on teaching, and an extensive resource guide for K-12 educators who want to go beyond the "heroes and holidays" approach to multicultural education. It features the work of leading scholars, including Jim Cummins, Christine Sleeter, Beverly Tatum, Sonia Nieto, Peggy McIntosh, Luis Rodriguez, Lisa Delpit, and Louise Derman-Sparks.

Park, F. W. (2001). *FINE forum e-newsletter: Teacher talk*. Retrieved, August 6, 2006, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/fineforum/forum2/teachertalk.html

Frederick Won Park shares his strategies for reaching out to diverse families and preparing student teachers to support families.

Steinbach, S. (Producer/Director). (1999). *Voices of experience: Cross cultural adjustment* [Video]. Davis, CA: The Seabright Group.

This 38-minute video relates the stories of more than a dozen international students and business people who had lived in the United States for about one year. Stories of culture shock, personal change, and homesickness are told, along with how adjustments were made in their new situations. Other topics include teaching styles in the American classroom, eating habits, manners, lifestyles, expression of affection in public places, cohabitation, individuality, communication patterns, punctuality, safe vs. dangerous environments, traffic laws, and informality.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on cultural understanding addresses the following topics:

- Parents' views on the differences between home culture and school culture
- Immigrant families' experiences and process of adjustment upon arriving to Canada
- Additional hardships and challenges faced by refugee families
- Concerns parents have about their child's schooling in a new culture
- Fears that children will be caught in a cultural divide
- The school's role in providing an atmosphere of understanding and cultural sensitivity
- The school's role in recognizing their students' ethno-cultural backgrounds
- Collaboration between parents and educators to understand cultural factors unique to each community

Questions to consider before viewing

- What are some concerns that newcomer families might have when their children are immersed in Canadian culture?
- What aspects of their culture might newcomer families particularly want to retain when they move to Canada?
- How might schools aid newcomer families in their adjustment to a new culture?

Questions to consider after viewing

- What did the newcomer families feel was most important in aiding their cultural adjustment to Canada? Why did they feel this way?
- What was done by schools featured in this DVD to promote cultural understanding?

Activity 1: Culture Circles

Time: 30 minutes

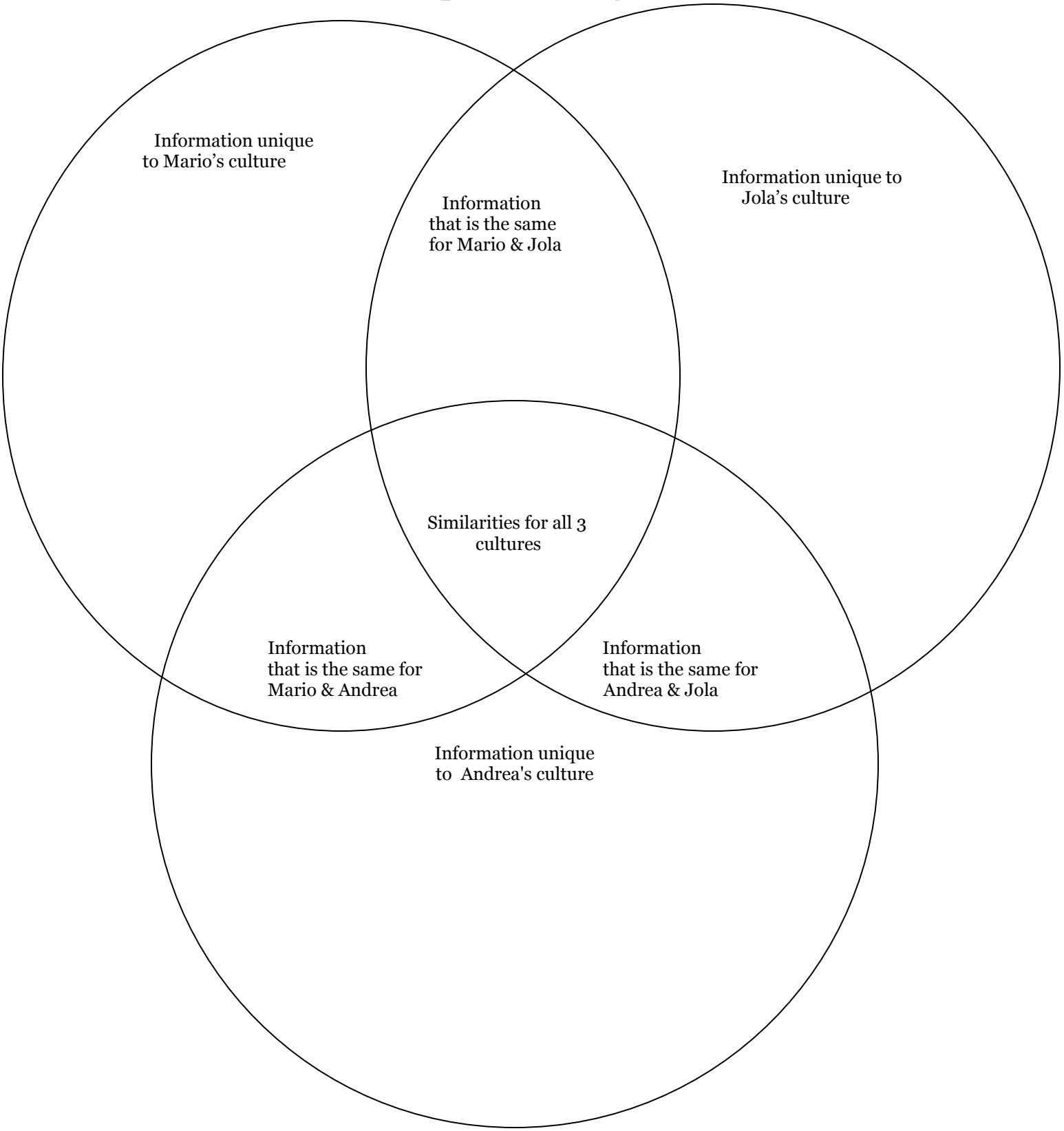
Materials: Pen/pencil, chart paper, marker, "Culture Circles Questions" handout

Objective: To gain a better understanding of differences and similarities between cultures.

Procedure:

- Divide into groups of 3. Try to have three different cultures represented in your group.
- Take turns interviewing each other using the questions provided on the "Culture Circles Questions" handout.
- Draw a Venn diagram on the chart paper provided. An example has been provided.
- Where no part of the circle is shared, write information that makes your culture unique. Title it: *Information unique to* _____.
- Where the circle is shared with one other circle, write the commonalities for two people. Title it: *Information that is the same for* _____*and*_____.
- Where all three circles overlap, write the cultural similarities for all three people in your group. Title it: *Similarities for all 3 cultures*.
- If time permits, share your Venn Diagrams with the other participants.

Sample Venn Diagram



Culture Circles Question

Use the following questions to interview the other members in your group about their culture:

1. Which country did your ancestors/family come from?
2. What languages do you speak/know?
3. What do you think is interesting about your culture?
4. When people from other countries think about your culture, what do they usually think of?
5. In your culture is it polite to be straightforward and direct when you talk to someone? (With whom is it OK and with whom is it not OK?)
6. What makes your culture different/unique from other cultures?
7. What do you like about your culture?
8. What don't you like about your culture?
9. How do young people in your culture behave differently from older people?
10. How do young people in your culture behave differently from people in this culture?
11. Are there many people of different cultures in your country?
12. If you could change one thing about your culture, what would it be?
13. What does it mean to be polite in your culture?
14. What is considered rude in your culture? (Is there anything in your culture that is considered rude that may not be considered rude in Canadian culture?)
15. If a group of people just came to your country from overseas, what advice would you give them?
16. Do you pray before each meal?
17. What is the best/most important thing your culture has given to the world?
18. What is the best/most important thing your culture/country has adopted from another culture?
19. Who is an important person (someone who is admired and respected) in your culture?

Activity 2: What Would You Do?

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Scenario cards

Objective: To help educators understand how to be culturally sensitive and help students feel proud of their cultural heritage.

Procedure: Each card contains information about a cultural situation that your students may experience. Read over the card, and think about a solution to the situation that would be culturally sensitive and enable your students to feel proud of their distinct identity. This activity can be done individually, in pairs and in small or large groups.

Scenario Cards

Card 1

Minoj Sindhu and his family arrived from Jullundur, India, two months ago. Minoj's first language is Punjabi, but he is also fluent in English and Hindi. Minoj is 13 years old and is in grade 7. He wears the traditional Sikh headdress, a turban, and as part of his religious doctrine, he, as well as all of his male relatives, do not cut their hair. During a lunch period that you were supervising, you noticed that Minoj was wearing a toque over his turban – an unusual sight for this normally well-groomed young man. The school's policy is such that students are not to wear toques or any headdress that is not specific to their cultural or religious traditions. You ask Minoj to remove his toque, and he hesitantly does so. That evening you get a call from Minoj's mother who is very concerned because her son is threatening to not go to school unless he can cut his hair. His mother wants to know why the school is not supporting her son's practice to wear the turban. As an educator what is your response? What is your response to Minoj? What is your response to Minoj's family?

Card 2

Rohma and Adil Nasser are 15 year-old twin siblings in grade 9. Both Rohma and Adil were born in Canada to Egyptian-born parents. Once Rohma turned 11 years-old, she began to wear the Islamic head-dress, the *hijab,* and this past year the twins requested to be excused from lunch period during the Islamic month of fasting, *Ramadan*. In two weeks, the grade 9 students will be going on a three-day, two-night winter camping excursion. The excursion is an annual trip for all grade nine students and is an opportunity for students to learn about wilderness survival. The Nassers agreed to allow Adil to attend the field trip, but refused to allow Rohma to attend. You asked Rohma why she was not going, and she explained that in her culture girls are not allowed to take part in such activities. What is your response? What is your response to Rohma? What is your response to Rohma's family?

Card 3

Xiao is an 8 year-old new immigrant from China in Grade 3. She is fluent in Mandarin and spends part of the day in an ESL class. On the first day of school, your colleague changed Xiao's name to Cynthia, explaining that it is a much easier name for the teachers to pronounce and explained to Xiao and her parents that from now on she should answer to Cynthia. What is your response? What is your response to Xiao? What is your response to your colleague?

Activity 3: Personal Reflection

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Cultural Behaviours" handout, "Personal Reflection" worksheet.

Objectives: To reflect on different cultural behaviours present in the classroom. To brainstorm strategies to support your students' cultural adjustment.

Procedure: Read the list of various cultural behaviours explained on the "Cultural Behaviours" handout. Answer the questions that follow on the "Personal Reflection" worksheet.

Cultural Behaviours

1. *Avoiding eye contact* – this is considered polite and respectful behaviour in some cultures, such as Laotian, Hmong, or Hispanic.

2. *Different attitudes about cooperation* – some students come from cultures that are based on the premise that people help each other in all areas. People from such cultures are unaware that in Canadian schools helping a fellow student with a problem may be construed as cheating. Cultures that strongly encourage cooperation include Polynesian, Southeast Asian, and Aboriginal cultures.

3. *Fear of making mistakes* – for some students, making a mistake is a greater error than leaving a question unanswered or asking another student for help. In such cultures the primary objective is ultimate correctness.

4. *Fear of being singled out for individual praise* – group or family is more important than the individual in some cultures.

5. *Different role expectations for males and females* – this attitude is most prominent with students who come from countries that ascribe different roles for men and women.

6. *Uneasiness with the informality of the classroom atmosphere* – public behaviour in certain cultures is always formal. Some cultures view North American schools as bordering on chaos and the informality as an invitation to misbehave. Students may be surprised when teachers wear jeans, sit on their desks, and insist on being called by their first names.

7. *Uneasiness with the Canadian school system* – Newcomers are often uneasy about the learner-centered, process-oriented curriculum and educational practices of our school systems, as opposed to other more traditional subject-centered learning environments.

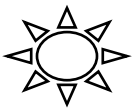
8. *Taboos about certain forms of physical contact* – for some cultures, the area around the head and shoulders is sacred and it is considered impolite for another person to touch these areas. In other cultures, persons of the opposite gender who are not related should not have any physical contact; this even includes shaking hands.

9. *Beliefs about the propriety of certain kinds of dress* – certain cultures have rigid customs as to what is proper and improper dress. Some students feel distress about having to wear gym clothes.

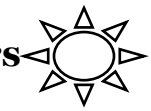
Personal Reflection

Answer the following questions:

- Were you aware of all the cultural behaviours mentioned in the list?
    - If not, what was new information? Did it surprise you?
- Have you experienced any of these differences in cultural behaviour in your classroom?
    - If yes, describe your experience(s). How did you handle it/them?
- Choose three different cultural behaviours from the list. For each one, answer the following questions:
    - How would you know that this behaviour was present in your classroom?
    - How would your personal beliefs influence how you reacted to this difference in cultural behaviour?
    - Where would you look for more information? (e.g., the Internet, a book)
    - Whom would you talk to? (e.g., the student, the class, the parents, etc.)
    - How would support your students' cultural adjustment?



Section for Parents and Caregivers
Cultural Understanding



The DVD chapter on cultural understanding addresses the following topics:

- Parents' views on the differences between home culture and school culture
- Immigrant families' experiences and process of adjustment upon arriving in Canada
- Additional hardships and challenges faced by refugee families
- Concerns parents have about their children's schooling in a new culture
- Fears that children will be caught in a cultural divide
- The school's role in providing an atmosphere of understanding and cultural sensitivity
- The school's role in recognizing their students' ethno-cultural backgrounds
- Collaboration between parents and educators to understand cultural factors unique to each community

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What values, beliefs, and traditions do you want your children to keep from their culture?
- What concerns do you have about your children being immersed in Canadian culture?
- What aspects of their culture might newcomer families particularly want to retain when they move to Canada?
- How might schools aid newcomer families in their adjustment to a new culture?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- What did the newcomer families feel were most important in aiding their cultural adjustment to Canada? Why did they feel this way?
- What was done by schools featured in this DVD to promote cultural understanding?

Activity 1: Canadian Dreams and Nightmares

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Canadian Dreams and Nightmares" worksheet

Objective: To express your hopes and concerns for your child's future.

Procedure: Read each question. Write your answer on the lines provided. Alternatively, discuss your answers with the group.

Canadian Dreams and Nightmares

Think about some of the dreams or hopes that you had when you first came to Canada.

Read each question.
Write your answer on the lines provided or discuss your answers with the group.

1. What dreams do you have for your children in Canada?

2. What fears/nightmares do you have about your child attending school in Canada?

3. What fears/nightmares do you have about your child growing up in a culture that is very different from the one in which you were raised?

4. Have you spoken to your child's school about some of your concerns, dreams, and nightmares? If so, what was their response? If not, why not?

Activity 2: How Culturally Sensitive is Your Child's School?

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist" handout

Objective: To determine if your child's school shows cultural sensitivity and awareness.

Procedure: Read each statement in the "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist." Circle the statements that are true. When you have finished, look at the circled statements in the *No* column. What could you do to help your child's school become more culturally aware?

Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist
How does your child's school rate?

Read each statement in the "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist."
Circle the statements that are true.

When you have finished, look at the circled statements in the *No* column.
What could you do to help your child's school become more culturally aware?

Is my school culturally sensitive?	**YES**	**NO**
Communication	The school makes an effort to make sure that information is conveyed to me. If my child's teacher has a question regarding my culture, he/she contacts me or asks a member in the community.	Miscommunication occurs frequently. Even though I speak English, my child's teacher often misinterprets what I am saying.
Cultural identification	The school took time to find out about my child's culture and to learn about beliefs and practices that are important.	The school has made little/no effort to learn about my child's culture.
Cultural beliefs	The school is aware of and respects my child's (and other children's) cultural beliefs.	The school is not aware of my child's (or other children's) cultural beliefs.
Cultural practices	The school is aware of and respects my child's (and other children's') dietary restrictions, holiday customs and dress code.	The school is not aware of my child's (or other children's') dietary restrictions, holiday customs and dress codes.
Holidays	The school acknowledges and/or celebrates cultural holidays such as Diwali, Eid, Kwanzaa, etc.	The school does not acknowledge and/or celebrate cultural holidays except for Easter, Halloween, Christmas, and other Western calendar holidays.

Communication

Sameena Eidoo & Sheila Manji

"There were no such meetings at the school to say that we are going to meet tonight to help the newcomer families communicate with the school and discuss how to educate the children and how to adapt to Canada. This is a multicultural country. How can we help the immigrant parents adapt to the life here? I don't think there have been any meetings about this topic at the school."
(Mandarin-speaking parent)

Communication

Background

In the field of parental involvement, it is widely accepted that educators and parents must engage in regular and open dialogue to define mutual expectations for teaching, learning *and* parenting—a key factor in school success in low-voice communities (Coelho, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

However, literature specific to parent-teacher communication tends to focus on *one-way* communication. Specifically, the focus is on more traditional and formal types of educator-to-parent communication, such as, memos notices, phone calls, report cards, and conferences (Coelho, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Miretsky, 2004). For parents from low-voice communities, these communication practices may not be relevant to their needs or expectations (Coelho, 1998). Traditional and formal types of educator-to-parent communication, which have been institutionalized to involve parents, tend to ignore the needs of parents from low-voice communities, who may be unfamiliar with the school's expectations (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Further, these communication practices may actually maintain a professional distance between parents and educators, hindering regular and open dialogue between them (Miretsky, 2004).

For parents from low-voice communities, creating and engaging in opportunities to talk with educators may be especially difficult. Barriers these parents might face in communicating with educators include (but are not limited to):

- low proficiency in the school language
- little knowledge of the school culture and school system
- different socio-economic status
- different knowledge-base
- different understandings and practices of communication
- fear
- lack of transportation
- lack of time
- unwelcoming school environment
- self-esteem
- school rules/regulations
- personality conflicts
- children's feedback regarding the school
- previous difficult experience in communicating with school personnel

Epstein (2006) advocates for "two-way, three-way and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students, and the community" (p. 2). In addition to multi-directional and multi-channel communication, "communication requirements" for building communities that promote school success include "investment in the school community, direct and honest communication, trust, mutual

respect, and mutual goals" (Miretsky, 2004, p. 815). When working with parents from low-voice communities, it is especially important to meet these communication requirements (Joshi, Eberly, & Konzal, 2005).

Advantages of meeting these communication requirements for all stakeholders include:

- increased mutual learning opportunities for parents and educators about each other's values, beliefs, and practices
- reinforcement of students', parents', and educators' goals
- improved parent-teacher relationships, teacher-student relationships, and parent-child relationships
- increased opportunities for parent-teacher collaboration
- increased congruency between home and school cultures
- increased opportunities for inclusion of home culture and language in the classroom and in the daily life of the school

Educators working with families from low-voice communities can reach out to parents by designing programs that encourage parents to visit the school. Such an invitation will promote informal interactions with educators and establish honest and direct two-way communication (Coelho, 1998).

More specifically, educators can also:

- be specific about the purpose of all phone calls and meetings
- arrange to have interpreters make phone-calls and/or be present at all meetings
- avoid the use of professional jargon in all communication
- ensure all written materials are translated into parents' home languages
- share information about students' social and academic successes
- share tips and strategies for supporting students at home
- share information about school policies and practices
- share information about educators' values, beliefs, and practices
- elicit information about parents' values, beliefs, and practices
- hold information nights for parents from specific groups
- invite community leaders from those groups to facilitate the information nights
- initiate informal conversation with parents when they visit the school
- invite parents into the classroom
- encourage parents to ask questions and express their concerns

For more tips and strategies for improving parent-teacher communication, refer to "Strategies for Dealing with Language Barriers" on page 26 of this handbook.

Annotated Bibliography

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools: An integrated approach. Bilingual education and bilingualism 13*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

The book outlines approaches and strategies that schools and teachers can adopt to provide educational experiences meeting the needs of all learners in culturally diverse schools and classrooms, especially those in areas in which new immigrants settle.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*. 100(1), 20-46.

This four-year study in a southern California school district examines parent involvement activities affecting about 100 families aiming to encourage Spanish-speaking parents to participate more fully in their children's schooling. Unconventional activities validating families' social and cultural experience are more successful than conventional means of encouraging parent participation.

Epstein, J. L. (2006). *Epstein's framework of six types of involvement*. Baltimore: Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools.

The document offers an updated version of Epstein's framework of six types of parental involvement, highlighting new definitions of key concepts. It also outlines sample practices, challenges, and expected outcomes for students, parents, and teachers.

Greenwood, G. E., & Hickman, C. W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *The Elementary School Journal*. 91(3), 279-288.

Discusses the nature of parent involvement, barriers to parent involvement, and ways to overcome these barriers. Teachers interact with the parent as audience, volunteer, paraprofessional, teacher of hihe/sher own child, learner, and decision maker. Ten recommendations for teacher education are offered.

Grossman, H. (2007). *Necessary conversations about English language learners: Templates for success*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems Co.

This is a workbook that will support school administrators and educators in the effort to communicate effectively about issues such as cultural diversity and creating a welcoming environment. The scenarios address elementary, secondary, and adult education levels.

Hamayan, E., & Freeman, R. (Eds.). (2006). *English language learners at school: A guide for administrators*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

This book is a practical guide that administrators and educators can use to evaluate their school's program for ELLs, identify strengths and needs of their program and practices, and develop strategies for action. Chapter 2 focuses on strategies for building relationships between the school and community as well as how to communicate with parents in ways that they can understand.

Hughes, P., & MacNaughton, G. (2001). Building equitable staff-parent communication in early childhood settings: An Australian case study. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*. 3(2), 1-19.

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of early childhood staff from a variety of early childhood settings in Australia regarding their experiences with the federal government's Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme (QIAS). The findings revealed that participants were consistently ambivalent about involving parents in their program because developing a shared understanding with parents about what was in the best interests of their child was neither easy nor guaranteed.

Joshi, A., Eberly, J., & Konzal, J. (2005). Dialogue across cultures: Teachers' perceptions about communication with diverse families. *Multicultural Education*. 13(2), 11-15.

The authors assess teachers' perceptions about communication with diverse families. They add to the literature on how parents and teachers can work together to build common expectations and to support student learning.

Miretzky, D. (2004). The communication requirements of democratic schools: Parent-teacher perspectives on their relationships. *Teachers College Record*. 106(4), 814-851.

This article argues for the recognition of the importance of talk among parents and teachers both as a research methodology and as a desirable outcome in creating and sustaining democratic communities that support school improvement. The study found that parents and teachers may routinely frame the meanings of their encounters in terms of the children they have in common. However, it appears that what they look for from each other is clearly connected to what they need for themselves as people who share a community that reflects democratic values.

Munn, P. (1985). Accountability and parent-teacher communication. *British Educational Research Journal*. 11(2), 105-111.

Drawing on recent research on accountability, Munn argues that parents are predominately interested in different kinds of information than what is available to them, and that parents' perception of teachers as experts inhibits them from obtaining this information.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on communication addresses the following topics:

- The significance of home-school communication for children, parents, and school personnel
- School personnel's understandings and practices of communication with parents from low-voice communities
- Parents' understandings and practices of communication with school personnel
- School personnel's experiences of communicating with parents from low-voice communities
- Parents' experiences of communicating with school personnel
- Barriers to home-school communication
- Possible solutions for overcoming barriers to home-school communication

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What do you understand by the word "communication"?
- Why is communication with parents important?
- How do you communicate with parents from low-voice communities?
- What factors influence your decision to communicate or not communicate with parents from low-voice communities?
- Do you communicate differently with parents from low-voice communities than you do with other parents? Why or why not?
- What obstacles might parents from low-voice communities face when trying to communicate with educators?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- How did educators facilitate communication with parents from low-voice communities?
- How might educators knowingly or unknowingly be hindering communication with parents from low-voice communities?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve communication with parents from low-voice communities?

Activity 1: Bla-bla-bla[2]

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: None

Objective: To experience miscommunication. To identify resources and strategies to ensure effective communication.

Procedure: Divide into groups of 3 or 4. You will have five minutes to prepare a dramatization of a meeting between members of the school (e.g. teacher, administrator) and a parent or parents. This could be a real meeting that you have experienced or a fictional one. Possible scenarios include a student having difficulty in class, a student getting into fights, a student not participating in group activities, or a first time meeting the between a teacher and parents.

When you perform your dramatization you may not use English. The only spoken words that you can use are 'bla-bla-bla'. Observe the other groups as they perform. Pay attention to any nonverbal clues or gestures used in the drama and see if you can understand the scenario being performed.

Discussion:
- How easy was it to understand the story line of each scenario?
- What was the overall 'feeling' in each scenario?
- What were any nonverbal forms of communication used in the scenarios?
- Which scenario, if any, was the easiest to understand? Why?
- Which scenario, if any, was the most difficult to understand? Why?
- Why might communication break down?
- How might cultural differences impact communication?
- How might language differences impact communication?
- What could you do to ensure effective communication?
- What resources or strategies could you use to 'fix' the scenarios?

[2]This activity idea was adapted from the "Communication Games" section of the UWC *Short Course Graduate Network* website. This activity can be viewed at http://uwcsc.uwc.org/resources/Games/Communication.rtf

Activity 2: Types of Communication with Parents

Time: Two weeks

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Home-School Communications Observation Chart" handout

Objective: To observe how educators at your school communicate with parents.

Procedure: Spend one week observing and collecting samples (past and present) of types of communication with parents. Use the enclosed "Home-School Communications Observation Chart" to help keep track of your observations. Answer the questions and complete the follow-up exercise on the page provided.

Home-School Communications Observation Chart

Type of communication with parents	**Example**	**Purpose of communication**	**Was this type of communication successful? (Yes, No, or Maybe)**
Formal communication • memos • phone calls • newsletters • conferences • parent-teacher association meetings			
Informal communication • Conversations before or after class			
Other			

Look at the completed chart and ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of communication was used most often?
  - Was this method successful? Why or why not?
- Were some types of communication better suited for certain purposes?
- Was there more than one type of communication for the same purpose?
- What were the most common purposes of communication?
  - Were these purposes mostly positive, mostly negative, or a mixture of the two?
- Were there any missed opportunities for communication with parents?
- Were there any types of communication in the list that were never used?
  - Could these types be incorporated?
  - Would they be successful?
- What do you see as a successful type of communication?
- What do you see as an unsuccessful type of communication?

Now, choose one type of communication from the "Home-School Communications Observation Chart" that you would like to modify or try in the second week. If you wish, use the lines provided below the chart to make some notes on how you plan to implement this type of communication (e.g., date, time, audience, language style, people to enlist for help, purpose of communication, and how you will determine the success of this type of communication).

Use the second week to try the type of communication that you have chosen.
- Ask yourself or someone else if the type of communication was successful.
- Would you try it again?
- If so, is there anything you would change next time?

Activity 3: Personal Reflection

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Personal Reflection" worksheet

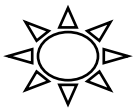
Objective: To reflect on how you communicate with parents from low-voice communities.

Procedure: Use the questions on the "Personal Reflection" worksheet to reflect on how you communicate with parents from low-voice communities. If you wish, use the lines provided to write down any ideas that come to mind.

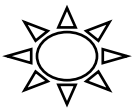
Personal Reflection

Read the questions below.
Use the lines provided to write your thoughts on how you communicate with parents.

- How do you communicate with parents from low-voice communities?
- Do you communicate differently with parents from low-voice communities than you do with others? Why or why not?
- What obstacles might parents from low-voice communities face when trying to communicate with you?
- How might you further your understanding of communication with parents from low-voice communities?
- How might you improve your practice of communication with parents from low-voice communities?



Parents and Caregivers Communication



The DVD chapter on communication addresses the following topics:

- The importance of home-school communication for children, parents, and school personnel
- School personnel's understandings of communication with parents from low-voice communities
- School personnel's methods of communicating with parents from low-voice communities
- Parents' understandings of communication with school personnel
- Parents' methods of communicating with school personnel
- School personnel's experiences of communicating with parents from low-voice communities
- Parents' experiences of communicating with school personnel
- Possible barriers to home-school communication
- Possible solutions for overcoming barriers to home-school communication

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What does communication mean to you?
- Why is communication with school personnel important?
- How do you communicate with school personnel?
- What do you need for communication with school personnel to improve?
- How do you expect school personnel to communicate with you?
- Have your experiences communicating with school personnel been positive or negative? Why?
- What do you think stops school personnel from communicating with you?
- What stops you from communicating with school personnel?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- What were some good strategies used by educators to communicate with parents?
- How might you knowingly or unknowingly be stopping communication with school personnel?
- What support services are available to you through the school, the school board, and the community?
- How can you use these support services to communicate effectively with school personnel?
- What other strategies could be tried to improve your communication with school personnel?

Activity 1 : Strategies for Communicating with School Personnel

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "How I Communicate" worksheet

Objective: To identify strategies to improve communication with school personnel.

Procedure: Answer true or false to the statements on the "How I Communicate" worksheet. Look at the false statements. What can you do to change those statements into true statements? Discuss possible strategies with other parents and caregivers in the room.

How I Communicate

Put an (X) in the appropriate box.

Statement	True	False
I have told school personnel that I am interested in communicating about my child's education.		
I have told school personnel that I wish to be informed about my child's progress.		
I have been to my child's school.		
I introduced myself to my child's teacher in the first week of school.		
I know the name of my child's teacher.		
I know the name of the principal at my child's school.		
I have given my child's teacher my contact information.		
I have given my child's teacher a list of times when I am available to meet.		
I have met the settlement worker at my school.		
I know how the settlement worker can help me.		
I have a list of people who can act as interpreters.		
I know how to contact the interpreter when needed.		
I have met a parent of my culture who has some experience and understanding of the school culture.		
I receive phone calls or meet with my child's teacher only when there is a problem.		
I write notes to the teacher in my child's agenda.		
I get responses to my notes in my child's agenda.		
I receive translations of newsletters or other print materials in my language.		

Look at the false statements.
What can you do to change those statements into true statements?
Discuss possible strategies with other parents and caregivers in the room.

Relationship Building

Sameena Eidoo & Sheila Manji

"I think it's also important to have an open door policy. Because if you have admin where you have the door shut all the time, and you have to make an appointment to come in and it may not be for a week or so…It doesn't work. If you have a parent come in when they have a problem, you can get it right in the first place…I've seen parents just walk in and say hello to you. And I think that is really important."
(Teacher of Somali-speaking students)

Relationship Building

Background

In an article noting the significance of the parent-teacher relationship, Keyes (2002) draws two contrasting images of "good" parent-teacher relationships.

Image 1
- Home and school are viewed as separate and unrelated
- Teachers and parents keep their distance and show mutual respect for one another
- The family meets the school's expectations
- The school educates the child
- The school does not place any unfair expectations on the home

Image 2
- The school is viewed as an extension of the home, like an extended family
- The school has a more open system allowing the family and the school to interact.

As Keyes suggests, images of "good" parent-teacher relationships vary. Moreover, these images can vary within the same school community. Miretsky found that "[i]nvestment in the school community, open and direct communication, trust, mutual respect, and mutual goals" are among the "communication requirements" cited by parents and educators for building and maintaining effective parent-teacher relationships within a school community (Miretsky, 2004, p. 815).

An effective parent-teacher relationship can have a positive influence and impact on students' social and academic success. However, students, parents, *and* educators can benefit from effective parent-teacher relationships. In a study of parent and educator attitudes and practices regarding the importance of parent-teacher relationships for all stakeholders, Miretsky (2004) reports that parents and educators tend to define themselves in relation to the student. One educator stated, "It makes it better in terms of the [child] knowing that these are two people who care about me, and care about what I'm doing" (p. 830). Another parent stated, "The teacher will understand what is going on with my [child] better" (p. 830). Both educators and parents identified the child's social and academic success as the main outcome of an effective parent-teacher relationship.

How parents and educators define their roles in relation to each other can influence and impact their learning outcomes from their working relationship (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). When teachers assume the role of professionals and parents assume the role of clients their opportunities for learning from each other are minimized (Goodman and Hickman, 1991). However, when teachers and parents assume the roles of equals and supportive colleagues, their opportunities for learning from each other are optimized. "'Independent of students' academic needs, parent-teacher relationships can foster individual growth, opportunities for mutual learning, support and respect for

adult efforts, and renewed appreciation and participation in the community of the school" (Miretsky, 2004, p. 820).

Factors that affect parent-teacher relationships
Keyes (2002) identifies three broad categories that affect an educator's ability to create and maintain effective relationships with parents: 1) the degree of match between teachers' and parents' cultures and values, 2) societal factors at work on families and school, and 3) how parents and teachers view their roles. Some of the key factors are listed below:

The degree of match between teachers' and parents' cultures and values
Culture and value-based factors that might affect parent-teacher relationships include:
- educators' own background
- conflicting beliefs about parent and educator roles and responsibilities
- differences in education level and/or knowledge base
- language differences
- class differences

Parents from low-voice communities often come from a different social background than do the educators of their children (Coelho, 1998).

Societal forces at work on family and school
Societal factors that might affect parent-teacher relationships include:
- increased flexibility and fluidity of family structures and roles
- job stress for both educators and parents

These societal factors also affect families from low-voice communities (Coelho, 1998). Families from low-voice communities do not necessarily fit into the mould of the traditional two-parent family. Furthermore, families from low-voice communities tend to experience high job stress. Finding, obtaining, and maintaining a job is especially difficult for these parents.

How teachers and parents view these roles
How educators and parents view their roles in relation to one another and the student also affects the parent-teacher relationship (Keyes, 2002). According to Keyes (2002), these views may be influenced by:
- parents' and educators' expectations
- parents' and educators' personal attributes
- parent-teacher communication

In a school culture of collaboration, educators and parents are encouraged to define mutual goals for learning, teaching, *and* parenting (Giba, 1999; Miretzky, 2004; Rosenthal & Sawyers, 1996). In such a non-threatening environment, educators and parents tend to regard each other as supportive colleagues, teachers are more likely to try out new ideas in the classroom, and parents are more likely to get involved (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Lindle, 1989; Miretzky, 2004; Rosenthal & Sawyers, 1996).

Strategies for Establishing and Building Effective Parent-Teacher Relationships

- Articulate a vision for parent-teacher relationships and find ways to support this vision
- Be familiar with theory, policy, and research concerning parent-teacher relationships to challenge resistance from parents and educators
- Provide regular opportunities for parents and educators to collaborate
- Create meaningful opportunities for parent involvement
- Build networks for parents and educators
- Build better relationships with students
- Express appreciation for efforts made by parents and educators
- Understand and practice conflict resolution strategies
    - Know the school policy for addressing parent-teacher disagreements
    - Use discretion about when and where children and their families are discussed
    - Choose an appropriate time and place to discuss disagreements

Annotated Bibliography

Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trust with schools and diverse families: A foundation for lasting partnerships*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved March 1, 2007 from http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003dec/trust.pdf

This book explains obstacles to strong family-school relationships: how to build trust between families and schools, and strategies for engaging all families. Also included are numerous examples and contact information for schools, districts, and parent groups throughout the Northwestern USA who have built trusting school-family relationships.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools: An integrated approach. Bilingual education and bilingualism 13*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

The book outlines approaches and strategies that schools and teachers can adopt to provide educational experiences meeting the needs of all learners in culturally diverse schools and classrooms, especially those in areas in which new immigrants settle.

Epstein, J. L. (2006). *Epstein's framework of six types of involvement*. Baltimore: Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools.

The document offers an updated version of Epstein's framework of six types of parental involvement, highlighting new definitions of key concepts. It also outlines sample practices, challenges, and expected outcomes for students, parents, and teachers.

Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1991). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*. 91(3), 289-305.

The authors studies connections between parent involvement programs, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' practices in inner-city elementary and middle schools. They examined patterns according to academic subject, classroom organization, and level of support for parent involvement and found that each variable has implications for the strengths of school programs and teachers' practices.

Giba, M. A. (1999). Forging partnerships between parents and teachers. *Principal*. 78(3), 33-35.

A former principal of Cielo Vista Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, Mary Anna Giba offers a short narrative account of her efforts to promote parent involvement at her school. This document includes strategies for building effective parent-teacher relationships.

Greenwood, G. E., & Hickman, C. W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *The Elementary School Journal*. 91(3), 279-288.

The authors discuss the nature of parent involvement, barriers to parent involvement, and ways to overcome these barriers. Teachers interact with the parent as audience, volunteer, paraprofessional, teacher of hihe/sher own child, learner, and decision maker. Ten recommendations for teacher education are offered.

Hamayan, E., & Freeman, R. (Eds.). (2006). *English language learners at school: A guide for administrators*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

This book is a practical guide that administrators and educators can use to evaluate their school's program for ELLs, identify strengths and needs of their program and practices, and develop strategies for action. Chapter 2 focuses on strategies for building relationships between the school and community as well as how to communicate with parents in ways that they can understand.

Keyes, C. R. (2002). Parent-teacher partnerships: A theoretical approach for teachers. In D. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Issues in early childhood education: Curriculum, teacher education, and dissemination of information* (pp. 107-118). Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Retrieved January 14, 2007, from http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/katzsym/keyes.html

This paper discusses the research on parent-teacher partnerships, including factors that affect the development of effective parent-teacher partnerships. The paper also presents a theoretical framework that teachers can use to enhance parent-teacher partnerships.

Lindle, J. C. (1989). What do parents want from principals and teachers? *Educational Leadership*, 47(2), 12-14.

According to a Pittsburgh study, all families, regardless of socioeconomic status, have similar preferences concerning the nature and conduct of school communications. Parents view a "professional," businesslike manner as undesirable, whereas a personal touch (or timely information presented informally) is most likely to win their esteem.

Miretzky, D. (2004). The communication requirements of democratic schools: Parent-teacher perspectives on their relationships. *Teachers College Record*. 106(4), 814-851.

The study found that parents and teachers may routinely frame the meanings of their encounters in terms of the children they have in common. However, it appears that what they look for from each other is clearly connected to what they need for themselves as people who share in a community that reflects democratic values.

Public Broadcasting System. (2006). *PBS Parents*. Retrieved January 15, 2007, from http://www.pbs.org/parents/

This website offers a variety of resources for parents, including resources on parent-teacher relationships.

Rosenthal, D. M., & Sawyers, J. Y. (1996). Building successful home/school partnerships: Strategies for parent support and involvement. *Childhood Education*. 72, 194-200.

Written for teachers and administrators, this article provides several strategies for promoting collaboration with parents. The authors suggest a number of questions educators can ask themselves to get a sense of how "family-friendly" they are.

The Oregon Parent Training and Information Center. (1997). *How can parent-teacher differences be prevented or resolved?* Retrieved January 5, 2007, from http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/conferencematerials/sped/2005/howcanparent.doc

Parents and teachers share responsibility for creating a working relationship that fosters children's learning. This brochure examines the cultural context for parent-teacher relationships and suggests some general strategies for creating a climate in which misunderstandings and disagreements between parents and teachers can be minimized through communication It also discusses some general principles for parents and teachers in dealing with misunderstandings or disagreements as they arise.

Witmer, M. M. (2005). The fourth R in education: Relationships. *The Clearing House*. 78(5), 224-228.

This article proposes concrete strategies stakeholders (teacher educators, teacher candidates, teachers, and administrators) can implement to ensure effective parent-teacher relationships.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on relationship-building addresses the following topics:

- The significance of effective parent-teacher relationships for students, parents, educators, and the community
- The requirements for effective parent-teacher relationships
- Parent and educator experiences of parent-teacher relationships
- Barriers to and strategies for building effective parent-teacher relationships

Questions to consider before viewing:

- How do you view your role as an educator?
- What are educators' roles and responsibilities in building effective parent-teacher relationships?
- What are parents' roles and responsibilities in building effective parent-teacher relationships?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- What were the factors affecting the relationships highlighted in this segment?
- What were the strategies implemented to improve parent-teacher relationships?
- Were these strategies effective?

Activity 1: A Vision for Effective Parent-Teacher Relationships[3]

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, chart paper, markers, "My Vision" and "Our Group's Vision" worksheets

Objective: To create a vision for effective parent-teacher relationships

Procedure: In the space provided on the "My Vision" worksheet, use words and/or pictures to express your vision for effective parent-teacher relationships (elements of a perfect parent-teacher relationship). When you have finished, share your vision with the group. Explain your vision: what you mean, and what you hope for. Pay attention to similarities and differences between your vision and that of others in the group. Jot them down in the table provided.

When everyone has finished sharing, talk about the differences and similarities. As a group, try to formulate a vision statement. Write and rewrite the vision statement on the chart paper provided until everyone agrees. Write the final version in the space provided on the "Our Group's Vision" worksheet. With the group, discuss what resources you might need and what steps you need to take in order to fulfill the goals in your vision statement. Jot these down in the space provided.

[3]This activity idea was adapted from *Partnerships by design: Cultivating effective and meaningful school-family-community relationships*. This guide is available at: http://www.nwrel.org/partnerships/cloak/booklet-one.pdf

My Vision

In the space provided, use words and/or pictures to express your vision for effective parent-teacher relationships (elements of a perfect parent-teacher relationship). When you have finished, share your vision with the group.

Explain your vision: what you mean, and what you hope for. Pay attention to similarities and differences between your vision and others in the group. Jot them down in the table provided.

An effective partner-educator relationship looks like this:

How does my vision compare to others?

Similarities	Differences

Our Group's Vision

As a group, try to formulate a vision statement. Write and rewrite the vision statement on the chart paper provided until everyone agrees.

Write the final version in the space provided below.

With the group, discuss what resources you might require and what steps you need to take in order to fulfill the goals in your vision statement. Jot these down in the space provided.

Group vision statement:

To fulfill our vision we need:

Activity 2: Assessing School Culture

Time: Variable

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Observation Chart" handout

Objective: To assess the culture of your school and, if needed, identify strategies to improve accessibility and openness to parents.

Procedure: Assess the culture of the school using the questions listed in the "Observation Chart." In the *Observation* column, write down what is currently happening at your school with respect to the question. In the *Strategies* column, write down any resources or methods that can be implemented to improve the situation.

Observation Chart

In the *Observation* column, write down what is currently happening at your school with respect to the question.
In the *Strategies* column, write down any resources or methods that can be implemented to improve the situation.

Questions	**Observations**	**Strategies**
Is the school inviting to parents from low-voice communities?		
Is there a family resource center?		
Are the signs to the main office visible and clear to non-English speakers?		
Are the various languages visible and integrated into the school? (e.g., posters and newsletters in various languages)		
Are the various cultures represented in school displays, events, and classroom activities?		

Has contact with parents been established?		
Has contact with parents been sustained?		
Are interpreters readily available?		
Are events, workshops, meetings, and other school events well attended by parents from low-voice communities?		
Are parents from low-voice communities involved or present during the school day?		
Do classroom activities necessitate family involvement?		

Activity 3: Personal Reflection

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Personal Reflection" worksheet

Objective: To create belief statements that express your goals for an effective parent-teacher relationship.

Procedure: Take a few minutes to consider and reflect on the questions on the "Personal Reflection" worksheet. This is an individual activity. No sharing is required. Take as much time as you need to think through all the questions. When you have finished, write five belief statements summarizing your thoughts. Overall, are your beliefs regarding parents from low-voice communities negative or positive? Ask yourself: "What can I do to change my negative belief statements into positive statements?"

Personal Reflection

This is an individual activity. No sharing is required. Take as much time as you need to think through all the questions below.

When you have finished write five belief statements summarizing your thoughts.

Overall, are your beliefs regarding parents from low-voice communities negative or positive? Ask yourself: "What can I do to change my negative belief statements into positive statements?"

Personal reflection questions

- What is your personal vision for parent-teacher relationships?
- What are your roles and responsibilities in this relationship?
- What are parents' roles and responsibilities in this relationship?
- What meaningful opportunities do you provide for parent involvement?
- Do you collect contact information from all parents?
- How often do you communicate with parents?
- When a student has a problem, whom do you seek for solutions and support?
- Do you think parents are difficult or easy to work with?
- Do you view parents as uncaring and uninvolved or as supporters and resourceful?
- Do you include parents in a plan to solve a problem with a student?
- Do you use an interpreter to communicate with a non-English speaking parent?
- Do you think getting parents involved takes too much time and is wasted effort?

Personal statements

I believe_____

_____.

I believe_____

_____.

I believe_____

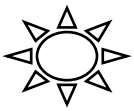
_____.

I believe_____

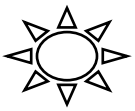
_____.

I believe_____

_____.



Section for Parents and Caregivers
Relationship Building



The DVD chapter on relationship-building addresses the following topics:

- The importance of building positive parent-teacher relationships for students, parents, educators, and the community
- The requirements for positive parent-teacher relationships
- Barriers to and strategies for building positive parent-teacher relationships

Questions to consider before viewing:

- How do you think a good parent-teacher relationship might affect your child at school and at home?
- What do you think are the educators' roles and responsibilities in building effective parent-teacher relationships with you?
- What do you see as your roles and responsibilities in building effective parent-teacher relationships with your child's educator?
- What factors prevent you from having a relationship with your child's educator?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- What were the factors affecting the relationships highlighted in this segment?
- Are these factors similar to or different from your situation?
- What strategies were tried to improve parent-teacher relationships?
- Would you be able to try these strategies? Why or why not?
- What other suggestions do you have for improving parent-teacher relationships?

Activity: Improving Parent-Teacher Relationships

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "'Parents' and Caregivers' Checklist" handout

Objective: To identify strategies to help improve your relationship with your child's educator.

Procedure: Complete the checklist by putting an (X) in the column that applies to you. Compare your list with the person beside you. Look at the X's in the middle column (No/Not Yet). Do you and your partner have any of the same situations marked? Choose one situation that you and your partner would like to change. Using the strategies you learned from the DVD or other strategies you might know, discuss how you could change or improve the situation. Share your situation and solution with the other parents and caregivers in the room. Get feedback from the other members present in the room. Listen to other situations and solutions. Give suggestions.

Note: This activity could be completed individually. Complete the checklist. Choose one situation in the middle column that you would like to change. Think and then write some strategies that you might try in your school to improve the situation.

Parents' and Caregivers' Checklist[4]

- Complete the checklist by putting an (X) in the column that applies to you.
- Compare your list with the person beside you.
- Look at the X's in the middle column (No/Not Yet).
    - Do you and your partner have any of the same situations marked?
- Choose one situation that you and your partner would like to change.
    - Using the strategies you learned from the DVD or other strategies you might know, discuss how you could change or improve the situation.
- Share your situation and solution with the other parents and caregivers in the room.
- Get feedback from the other members present in the room.
- Listen to other situations and solutions.
- Give suggestions.

Note: This activity could be completed individually. Complete the checklist. Choose one situation in the middle column that you would like to change. Think and then write some strategies that you might try in your school to improve the situation.

The teacher and/or administrator…	**Yes**	**No/Not Yet**	**Not Applicable**
only asks to see me when there is a problem.			
lets me know when my child is doing well.			
asks me for suggestions on how to help my child.			
listens to my concerns.			
sees me as a partner in my child's education.			
sees me as being unimportant in my child's education.			
calls my home when my child does something wrong.			
calls my home when my child does something good.			
can only meet with me during the school day.			
makes time to meet with me outside the school day.			
has met me more than once.			
has used an interpreter to communicate with me			
explains how they will grade my child.			
explains how they are helping my child improve.			
tells me my child is the problem.			

[4]This checklist was adapted from: Rosenthal, D.M., & Sawyers, J.Y. (1996). Building successful home/school partnerships: Strategies for parent support and involvement. *Childhood Education*. 72, 194-200.

The Roles of Schools and Families

Lee-Anne Gershater, Mario Lopez-Gopar, & Sheila Manji

"The teacher's role here is not the same as the teachers' roles in Somalia. I believe that the teacher in Somalia used to play the parent and the teacher role at the same time. But the teachers in Canada play only the role of the teacher and that is not the same as the roles we used to expect from back home teachers. It is a very difficult situation and getting used to it is also difficult…"
(Somali-speaking parent)

The Roles of Schools and Families

Background

There has been limited research that focuses on how teachers and immigrant parents negotiate their different perspectives of the teacher's role. The scarcity of material on the subject might lie in the fact that attempting to culturally categorize the teacher's roles would result in overgeneralizations and stereotyping. This is because the role of the teacher is not only determined by one's cultural identity, but also by other factors such as age, education, previous school experiences, and preferred styles of learning (Stanley, 2004). Though we are aware of the risks of culturally categorizing the teacher's role, we do feel that there is value in exploring these perceptual variations. We believe that this is a worthwhile task because of the evidence of cultural differences discussed by both parents and teachers in the DVD.

In some cultures, the teacher is one of the most important members in the community and is highly respected. An Arabic-speaking parent in the video explains:

> *"In our society, the teacher holds a special place. The poet, Ahmad Shawky says, 'Rise to the teacher and salute him. The teacher is almost a messenger from God.' The teacher in our culture is like a prophet, and a prophet is the medium through which you teach principles, whether etiquette, academic, or even religious. When we arrived in Canada, we realized that this image of the teacher did not exist."*

In other cultures, teachers take on a parental role in their student's life; having the authority to guide and discipline the child just as a parent would do in the Canadian context. In these cultures, parents do not involve themselves with the school because the expectation is that teachers will act in their child's best interest as both a teacher and as a parent while the child is at school.

In a study of Asian and Pacific Island parents, Schwartz (1995) found that parents felt that they were not supposed to interfere with the education of their child as they viewed teachers as the authority over that aspect of the child's life. A teacher that sought parental input was viewed by parents as incompetent.

Newcomer parents to Canada may not be familiar with the role of their child's teacher, and their expectations may differ depending on their former environment. When parents discover that the teacher's role does not coincide with their expectations or previous experiences, tension and conflict can emerge between the teacher and parents. It may also lead to parents' alienation.

For example, a teacher in Canada might be concerned about parents' absence from the school and assume that this means a disinterest in their child's education. The parent, on the other hand, may assume that parental presence in the school would be interfering and that the teacher would contact the parents if there were something serious to discuss.

Due to the divergent perspectives on the role of the teacher across cultures, it becomes important for teachers and school administrators in Canada to make newcomer parents aware of the expectations placed on teachers and parents within the Canadian context.

Strategies to Help Educators Facilitate Parents' Understanding of Teachers' and Parents' Roles in Canada

Awareness of Canadian cultural values and beliefs

- Every educational institution has its own unique cultural characteristics.
- Try to become more aware of the cultural values and beliefs of mainstream educational institutions in Canada (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999 in Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003).

Understand the cultural values and beliefs of the families you are serving

- Do your own research (books, pamphlets, internet, etc.).
- Ask parents more direct questions about their culture (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999 in Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003).
- Do not assume that every family follows the beliefs and practices that you read about in books (Lahman & Park, 2004).

Reflect upon your relationship with the parents with whom you communicate more easily

- Consider that people tend to communicate more easily with those who are similar to themselves.
- The closer the parents' cultural characteristics are to those of the school, the higher the chance of parents being able to advocate for their child (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).
- Challenge yourself to communicate effectively with parents who may have expectations and backgrounds that are very different from your own (Flett & Conderman, 2001).

Meet with parents

- Try to clarify what the role of the teacher is in Canada.
- Try to explain the expectations for parent participation in Canadian schools. (Schwartz, 1995).

Annotated Bibliography

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*, 100, 20-46.

This four-year study in a southern Californian school district examined parent-involvement activities as they encouraged isolated Spanish-speaking parents to participate more fully in their children's schooling. Unconventional activities validating families' social and cultural experience are more successful than conventional means of encouraging parent participation.

Flett, A., & Conderman, G. (2001). Enhance the involvement of parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Intervention in School and Clinic,* 37(1), 53-55.

Flett and Conderman present twenty strategies for enhancing the involvement of parents from diverse backgrounds, including exploring parents' expectations, learning about the family's culture, and providing communication in many forms.

Hwa-Froelich, D. A., & Westby, C. E. (2003). Frameworks of education: Perspectives of Southeast Asian parents and Head Start staff. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools,* 34(4), 299-319.

This study found that Asian parents, Southeast Asian parents, and Head Start staff were unaware of differences in their beliefs and values in the area of education, parenting, child learning, and disabilities. This led to confusion and misunderstanding.

Lahman, M. K. E., & Park, S. (2004). Understanding children from diverse cultures: Bridging of parents and teachers. *International Journal of Early Years Education,* 12(2), 131-142.

This is a case study that explores how Korean and Chinese families negotiate their perspectives with U.S. teachers regarding school.

Park, F. W. (2001). *FINE forum e-newsletter: Teacher talk*. Retrieved, August 6, 2006, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/fineforum/forum2/teachertalk.html

Frederick Won Park shares his strategies for reaching out to diverse families and preparing student teachers to support families.

Schwartz, W. (1995). *A guide to communicating with Asian American families: For parents/about parents.* Retrieved August 6, 2006, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/26/9e/6a.pdf

This guide describes how the backgrounds and cultures of the various Asian and Pacific Islander groups affect their attitudes and behaviour.

Stanley, K. (2004). *The role of the teacher, the role of the learner, the role of technologies: Finding balance in the classroom*. Retrieved August 6, 2006, from http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej28/f1.html

This website highlights a discussion on ESL/EFL classroom pedagogy, looking in particular at the role of the teacher as it emerges through the new technologies we are incorporating into our lives. It also revisits older questions of the role each of us plays in the learning process.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on the roles of schools and families addresses the following topics:

- The teacher's role in different cultures
- Parents' frustrations in dealing with the mismatch between their expectations of teachers and the role that Canadian teachers play
- Teachers' awareness of parental expectations
- How teachers negotiate their role in light of parents' differing expectations
- The need for a school's teaching staff to reflect the diverse student population so that students have role models from their own culture
- The need for administration to be a role model for teachers on good parent-teacher relationships

Questions to consider before viewing:

- How do you view your role as an educator?
- What expectations do you have of parents?
- What expectations do you feel parents have of you?
- Are you aware of any cultural differences in parents' and teachers' roles?
- How do you negotiate differences with parents?
- Whose responsibility is it to help parents understand the teacher's role and the parent's role in the Canadian education system?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- How are teachers viewed in different cultures?
- How do these views match or mismatch with your view of a Canadian educator?
- How does parent involvement differ in various cultures?
- How do these views match or mismatch with your expectations of parents in Canada?
- How can educators inform and help parents understand the role of teachers and parents in the Canadian education system?

Activity 1: Learning From Stories[5]

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Positive Communication" worksheet

Objective: To help participants understand how positive statements can facilitate more effective communication with parents.

Procedure: On the "Positive Communication" worksheet, write a story about a time when you had a positive communication experience with a parent. Alternatively, tell your story to someone in the room.

Each story should address the following questions:

- Why do you think the experience was a positive one?
- What was your goal?
- What approach did you use?
- How did this communication make you feel?
- How did this communication affect how you saw yourself as an educator?

Now, share your stories with the group. Discuss any patterns in the stories that make them positive experiences. Create a list of five tips or strategies for positive communication with parents.

[5] Source: This activity idea was adapted from Activity 1-2: Communication Stories in the *Training guides for the head start learning community: Communicating with parents*. This guide is available at: www.headstartinfo.org/cgi-bin/pubcatstore.cfm?CatID=97&do=

Positive Communication

My positive communication story

Write about a time that you had a positive communication experience with a parent. Your story should answer the following questions:

- Why do you think the experience was a positive one?
- What was your goal?
- What approach did you use?
- How did this communication make you feel?
- How did this communication affect how you saw yourself as an educator?

Strategies for positive communication with parents

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Activity 2: Taking Concrete Steps

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Parent Voices" handout

Objectives: To be aware of different parental perceptions of the role of the teacher. To recognize how knowledge/lack of knowledge of parents' perceptions can strengthen or weaken teacher-family relations. To gain practice in understanding parents' perceptions.

Procedure: Read each quote on the "Parent Voices" worksheet. Discuss each quote and the corresponding questions.

Parent Voices

Quote 1

The teacher's role here is not the same as the teachers' roles in Somalia. I believe that the teacher in Somalia usually plays the parent and the teacher role at the same time. But the teachers in Canada play only the role of the teacher and that is not the same as the roles we used to expect from teachers back home. It is a very difficult situation and getting used to it is also difficult.

- What is your role as a teacher here in Canada?
- How do you think parents feel when they begin to realize that the role of the teacher in their home country is different from that in Canada?
- If a parent were sharing this with you, what would be your next step?

Quote 2

Yes, that changed a lot, because there was a good relationship established between parents, the principal, and the community. When the teacher realized that the principal is welcoming and respects parents, they also started to respect us. So the principal plays a key role. If the principal is a good one, there will be good relationship between the teachers and parents. If the principal is a bad one, who ignores the parents and does not welcome parents, so the teachers will also behave like the principal. So I believe that the principal is a key part in the teachers, parents, and school triangular relationship.

- How do you think this scenario plays out in a school that is not welcoming to parents?
- What kind of behaviour would you observe among school staff?
- If you had heard this being said about the school you worked in, what approach would you take?

Quote 3

Although in some schools the number of the Somali students is higher than the numbers of other newcomers, you still see a couple of immigrant teachers in the schools. Although we are more in number, you will not see one Somali teacher in the schools. So other immigrant students have someone who went through the system, understands the system, understands the culture back home and this culture, and knows the expectations on these children and can bring all these information together. Before the parents get involved, these teachers can be at least interpreters for the students and act as role models. Our children do not have role models in the schools; we are new and have ourselves many other problems. So I would suggest that the TDSB should look at where the number of the Somali children is high and hire Somali teachers. We have now some Somali teachers, who have done their education here, can take over. Even if it is one or two, they can be role model for our children.

- How do you think parents may feel about the school system and its teachers in this situation?
- How do you think this situation could be changed?
- Do you think having different cultures represented in the school staff is valid?

Activity 3: Cross-Cultural Practices in the School

Time: variable

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Cross-Cultural Observation Chart" handout

Objectives: To discuss suggestions from Flett (2001) to promote cross-cultural communication about the role of the teacher. To determine current practice in schools. To suggest next steps to improve practice.

Procedure: This activity can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups. Read the *Recommendations* for cross-cultural communication on the "Cross-Cultural Communication Observation Chart" provided. Take some time to observe or reflect how these recommendations are being employed in your school. In the *Current Practice* column write about what is being done in your school to meet the recommendations. In the *Next Steps* column write how you could improve the situation, if needed.

At the next meeting, discuss your findings and suggestions for improvements with the group. Start with the *Current Practices* column. Are there any similarities or patterns across schools? Are there certain recommendations that need attention than others? Next, discuss what you wrote for *Next Steps*. Listen to others' suggestions for ideas that might work in your school. Fill them in on your chart where appropriate as a reminder.

Cross-Cultural Communication Observation Chart

Read each recommendation.
In the *Current Practice* column write what is being done in your school to meet these recommendations.
In the *Next Steps* column write how you could improve the situation, if needed.

	Recommendations	Current Practice	Next Steps
1	Explore parents' personal beliefs, values, and expectations that influence their interaction with others.		
2	Learn about the family's culture to effectively build a trusting relationship with parents.		
3	Respect and recognize the family's culture and beliefs.		
4	Make use of casual contacts with parents.Research shows that parents prefer communication with teachers to be informal and frequent (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997).		
5	Provide an orientation session for families in their native language so that the role of the teacher and the school policy and procedures can be discussed.		

	Recommendation	Current Practice	Next Steps
6	Develop a school resource book that details the policies and procedures of the school, as well as instructional methods. Handbooks can be translated.		
7	Involve interpreters for major language groups at school council meetings/parent workshops.		
8	Be specific about how you wish parents to assist their children at home. Hold an introductory meeting with interpreters to explain your program to parents.		
9	Share with parents the tradition in Canada of parents helping out in the school. Be specific about how parents can become involved in the school setting.		
10	Use sensitivity when communicating with parents.		

Activity 4: Personal Reflection

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Personal Reflection" worksheet

Objective: To reflect on your role as an educator working with parents from different cultures.

Procedure: This is an individual activity. No sharing is required. Take a few minutes to consider and reflect on the questions in the "Personal Reflection" handout. Take as much time as you need to think through all the questions. When you have finished, use the lines below to summarize your thoughts.

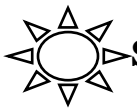
Personal Reflection

Read through the personal reflection questions. Take some time to think through your answers. Summarize your thoughts on the lines below.

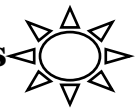
Personal reflection questions

- Have your views of the role of the teacher changed at all? If yes, how?
- What have you learned about the role of the teacher in different cultures?
- What have you learned about parental expectations in different cultures?
- What have you learned that will help you negotiate cultural expectations with parents?
- Are you aware of the personal beliefs and values of your students' parents regarding education? If yes, how did you become aware? If no, what could you do to become more aware?
- Do you encourage informal interactions with parents or do you require an appointment to meet?
- Do you (or your school) provide an orientation session for new families in their native language?
- Do you (or your school) have written materials in a variety of languages that explain teachers' and parents' roles for newcomers?
- Are interpreters readily available for informal and formal meetings with parents?
- Would you like parents to be more involved in your classroom? If yes, how could you make this happen? If no, think about why not.
- Do you let parents know how they can help their children at home? If yes, how is this done? If no, what can be done to make sure parents are more aware?

Personal reflection



Section for Parents and Caregivers
The Roles of Schools and Families



The DVD chapter on the role of schools and families addresses the following topics:

- The role of the teacher across cultures
- The challenges involved in positive parent-teacher communication
- The strategies for building cross-cultural understanding
- The need for diversity in school staff
- The importance for administration to act as role models for teachers to create good parent-teacher relationships

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What do you consider the role of the teacher to be?
- What do you think the role of the teacher is in Canada?
- What do you consider the role of the parent to be?
- What do you think the role of the parent is in Canada?
- How could any differences be worked out?
- What would help you understand the differences between your culture and Canadian culture?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- In the video, what kinds of expectations did parents have of teachers in their home country?
- How are these views the same or different from what you expect from teachers?
- What is the role of the educator in Canada?
- What is the role of the parent in Canada?
- How can educators help parents understand the teacher's role?
- How can educators help parents understand their expectations of parents?
- How can you improve your understanding of the teacher's role and your role in Canada?

Activity: Understanding the Roles of Teachers and Parents

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Checklist for Parents and Caregivers"[6] handout

Objectives: To determine what strategies you have tried with your child's teacher. To determine what strategies are available to you in establishing communication with the teacher.

Procedure: On the "Checklist for Parents and Caregivers," put an (X) in the box beside the strategies that you have already tried. Add any missing strategies to the bottom of the checklist. Look at the boxes that are empty. Do you feel comfortable trying these unmarked suggestions? Why or why not? What supports would you need to try these suggestions? Discuss possible strategies with other parents and caregivers in the room.

[6]This checklist was adapted from: Flett, A., & Conderman, G. (2001). Enhance the involvement of parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Intervention in School and Clinic,* 37(1), 53-55.

Checklist for Parents and Caregivers

Here is a list of suggestions to help you improve cross-cultural communication with your child's teacher and school.

Put an (X) in the box if you have tried the strategy.

- ☐ Explained the role of the teacher in your home country to your child's teacher.
- ☐ Shared your personal beliefs and the expectations of a school teacher.
- ☐ Shared information about your family's culture.
- ☐ Listened to what your child's teacher had to say about his or her role as the teacher.
- ☐ Thought about how your expectations were different from what the teacher said he or she could do.
- ☐ Asked for an interpreter. You may understand English well, but you may need an interpreter to help share necessary information with your child's teacher.
- ☐ Asked the teacher what he/she expects from you as a parent.
- ☐ Listened to what your child's teacher had to say about his or her expectations of you.

Information for Parents

Ranya Khan & Andrea Suley

"It's just that since we've gone through two different school systems, we expected to find the same system here. Honestly, we couldn't even imagine that the system would be so different. So drastically different, that it was already too late when we realized the mistakes that we had made…"
(Russian-speaking parent)

Information to Parents

Background

Newcomer families face many challenges and have many questions about their new homeland. It is essential that they are well informed and feel confident to make decisions about their child's schooling. The school is a valuable resource for cultural, social, and academic knowledge that can support the newcomer parent and child's integration into Canadian society. Many families recognize that schooling in their home countries is significantly different than the Canadian school system. Initially, the differences may cause frustration, insecurities, and reluctance on the part of the parent to trust that their child is receiving an adequate education. Some parents believe that the less interaction they have with their child's teacher, the better their child is doing academically and socially in school. Schools play a crucial role in ensuring that newcomer families are fully informed in all aspects of their children's education**.**

Strategies to help newcomer students adjust:

Welcome parents and caregivers

- Whether or not schools have an open-door policy for their students' families will determine how welcome families feel at the school.

Create an environment that facilitates communication

- An affective environment that facilitates communication allows families to feel confident and secure when sharing and obtaining information about their children's education.

Emphasize the importance of parents and caregivers having an "active role":

- Schools need to clearly define the role of parents/caregivers and what expectations schools have for parent involvement.

Bilingual parent volunteers:

- Schools can survey the linguistic skills of their students' families and solicit volunteers to help newcomers.

Outreach mechanisms:

- Distribute information that is useful and allows for further communication.
    - translate letters
    - have information nights when parents/caregivers are available and on topics that are of interest to families
    - provide services that are deemed important (e.g., daycare, language and culture classes)

Important information that should be conveyed to families

- Your school's ESL program and its benefits
- Mechanics of the school
- School rules, routines, and behavioural expectations
- Curriculum (homework, assessment, EQAO, course choices)
- Criteria for placing and exiting students
- Clarification of the school's procedures and culture – hidden curriculum
- Provincial testing (EQAO etc.)
- Report cards, study habits, parent-teacher conferences
- Outstanding questions parents/caregivers may have

A Sample Letter to Parents

The following is an example of a letter that teachers may wish to send home to their students' families. It details information about the school that would be beneficial for a family new to the Canadian education system and unsure about the policies and procedures of their child's school.

Important Information for Parents of English Language Learners

School Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. There is no student supervision before or after these hours unless your child is participating in the Breakfast Club and/or the Homework Club. You can get information about these programs in the school office.

We need this important information from you: your address, home and work phone number, cell number, and an emergency contact number. If you move, or your telephone number changes, you need to give us this new information as soon as possible in case of an emergency.

It is important to **read with and/or to your child at home** in either English or in your native language. Usually, students have homework Mondays-Fridays. If you find this homework is too difficult for your child, it is important that you communicate with your child's teacher by note or phone call. If you require books to support your child's reading, please feel free to visit our school library, and our librarian will be happy to assist you.

Several times during the year, **it is necessary to have a conference with your child's teacher.** If you need a translator, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time. If you need transportation, again, please let your child's teacher know well ahead of the conference, and we will help you find a way to get to school. Parent-teacher conferences are an opportunity for both you and your child's teacher to communicate any academic or personal concerns, questions, and goals.

If you are interested in being a parent volunteer **please contact "Insert name of volunteer contact" at "Insert phone number of volunteer contact"**. These individuals can also give you information about **free adult English classes** held at our school twice a week in the evening.

Children may bring home books, tapes, tape recorders, and other equipment (games) in order to help them and their families learn English. We hope you have fun using these materials with your children. Please return them in good condition so your child will be allowed to check out more materials in the future.

Students receive **progress reports several times each year.** You should read these, sign them, and return the envelope to school with your child. If you have a question about your child's progress report please contact your child's teacher to set up a meeting.

If your child misses school, you must write a note, or call the school at (insert phone number here), explaining the reason for your child's absence. If your child is late or needs to leave school early, you must sign your child in or out in the office before leaving or returning your child.

At times, your student is going to receive **a letter about vaccinations.** It is important that children have their shots on time or they may be suspended.
There is a dress code at our school. This information is in your school handbook.

Every Tuesday, important information goes home in a special yellow folder. Parents are expected to read the information, sign whatever is needed, sign and date the folder itself, and return it to the child's teacher. If you need help understanding the information in the folder, **there are bilingual parents who can help you.** Contact your child's teacher for those names and numbers. You may also send a note to the ESL teachers.

It's important that your child knows your address and phone number (work and home) in case of an emergency, and especially for the bus drivers.

We now have Spanish, Mandarin, Italian, Punjabi, and Russian translation equipment for meetings and events at this school. We hope this will make it better for parents who attend school functions.

We need to know how your child is to get home in case there is an early school closing due to bad weather. You will receive the Inclement Weather Form. Please return this to your child's teacher. If you need to find information about early closings, you can watch your local TV channel, radio station, or the school division's website.

Annotated Bibliography

Bassoff, T. (n.d.) How-to: adjust your teaching styles for students in ESL/Bilingual classrooms. Teachers Network. Retrieved January 13, 2007, from http://teachers network.org/ntol/howto/eslclass/eslparents.htm

How-To: Adjust Your Teaching Styles for English Language Learners (ELL) in ESL/Bilingual Classrooms
Note this is different from the title attached to the url above. Should it be changed? (Ted)

This short article highlights the importance of involving ESL parents in the classroom as well as strategies that can be implemented to do so. Bassoff also provides some further resources to consult for hands-on activities in the classroom that help with a community outreach approach.

Beykont, Z. (Editor). (2002). *The power of culture: Teaching across language difference*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

This book is a compilation of writings and research done by several scholars. Aimed toward concerned teachers, administrators, and policy makers, their contributions address three main issues: educational reforms and language minority students, successful teaching across language difference, and preparing teachers to teach across language differences.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating Identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (2nd Edition). Los Angeles, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

In *Negotiating Identities*, University of Toronto rofessor Jim Cummins addresses several issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms. He also goes on to provide strategies for teachers to employ in these diverse environments to help students achieve greater social and academic success.

Fitzpatrick, F. (1987). *Multilingual matters: The open door*. Exeter: Short Run Press.

Multiligual Matters is a case study investigating young South Asian ESL students. In addition to the findings of the study, the community context, educational/school context, teaching & learning processes, and the language education of young bilingual children are discussed.

Fulton, J. M., Golden, L., Smallwood, B. A., & Savage, K. L. (nd). *Parenting for academic success: A curriculum for families learning English*. National Center Family Literacy. Delta-Systems Co., Inc. http://www.delta-systems.com/ proddetail.cfm?cat=1&toc=91&stoc=0&pronum=3372

Parenting for Academic Success: A Curriculum for Families Learning English is a 12–unit curriculum designed for parents who are non–native speakers of English. Its goals are two–fold: 1) to develop the English language skills of parents and 2) to increase the ability of parents to support the language and literacy development of their children in kindergarten through grade three. The curriculum has two components—a set of *Parent Workbooks* for all 12 units and a comprehensive *Teacher's Resource Manual*.

Houk, F. (2005). *Supporting English language learners: A guide for teachers and administrators*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Supporting English Language Learners is a guide designed for teachers and administrators that provides instruction for how to meet English language learners' needs. Houk gives hands-on teaching ideas and outlines underlying themes behind successful English language learner programs. Specific sections are devoted to classroom matters, advocacy, and creating a context for working with other staff and building home-school partnerships.

Ministry of Education. (2002*). Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner: ESL/ELD Companion*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved January 11, 2007 from http://www.ocup.org/resources/documents/companions/esleld2002.pdf

This is an online version of the ESL/ELD curriculum document designed for Ontario teachers. It outlines terminology, gives a background for ESL/ELD teaching, and covers several issues newcomer students and families face when arriving in Ontario. In addition to providing strategies for effective program delivery, the roles of the school, teacher, and parent are also highlighted.

People for Education. (2005). *Tips for parents: High school courses and choices*. Retrieved January 6, 2007 from http://www.peopleforeducation.com/resources/tipsheets/English.pdf

This question and answer sheet is available in several different languages. It is designed to inform parents of students in Ontario high schools about how to assist their children with academic and career planning.

Richards, J. (1994). *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Educating Second Language Children is based on the work of leading researchers in elementary education. Going beyond classroom instruction, Richards addresses the role of the school, family, and community and how important they are in terms of newcomer students and a successful education.

Scarcella, R. (1990). *Teaching language minority students in the multicultural classroom*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

This text is a general guide for teaching ESL students. Designed for teachers, administrators, and anyone working with English language learners in all grades, Scarcella's text provides strategies to use in the classroom and covers a wide variety of issues, including maximizing minority parent participation in schools.

Summary of the DVD Chapter

The DVD chapter on information for parents addresses the following topics:

- Parents' concerns about how well informed they are about their children's education
- Parents' views on accessibility to information regarding their children's school and education
- Schools' responses and attempts to inform parents
- Parents' frustrations with miscommunication and lack of information regarding their children's schooling
- Parents' expectations and assumptions regarding Canadian education
- Differences in curriculum, teaching, assessment
- Schools' roles and responsibilities to provide parents with information
- Strategies and success stories for helping parents understand the Canadian school system and their children's education

Questions to consider before viewing

- What information is essential for parents to make an informed choice about their children's education?
- How might relationships between educators and parents be the same or different outside of Canada?
- How might relationships between educators and students be the same or different outside of Canada?
- What information should teachers have about their students or students' families in order to provide a meaningful educational environment?

Questions to consider after viewing

- What were the major areas of concern highlighted by parents and educators in this segment?
- How can information be more easily and reliably distributed to newcomer parents regarding these aspects of their children's education?

Activity 1: New Life in a New Land

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Gustonia" worksheet

Objective: To think about the kind of information you would want if you moved to a new country and needed to enrol your children in school.

Procedure: In a small group, read over the "Gustonia" scenario and answer the questions that follow.

Gustonia

Read the scenario. Answer the questions that follow.

> You and your family were forced to flee Canada and are now living in Gustonia, where the official language is Gusto, not English. Gustonians are not familiar with western media or the English language. Their script is completely different from English and there is minimal access to bilingual English and Gusto speaking translators. Your two children are both school-aged; your 6-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son need to be enrolled in school.

1. What information would you want to have about your children's new school as you go about the enrolment process?

2. How would you establish a relationship with your children's teacher?

3. How would you access information about your children's school?

4. What would be the most difficult aspect of your adjustment process?

5. What could your children's teacher or school do to make you feel welcome?

6. What could your children's teacher or school do to assist you in obtaining information about your child's education?

7. List 5 strategies that you would employ to successfully access information about your children's school/education.

Activity 2: Planning an Information Night for Newcomer Families

Time: 45–60 minutes

Materials: Chart paper, markers

Objective: To plan an information night for newcomer families

Procedures: In pairs, or groups of no more than three, your task is to plan an information night for newcomer families. Visualize what your night will look like, what information you hope families will receive, your goals and objectives for the night, and how you plan on accomplishing these goals. Present your plan to the other participants. (A sample plan has been provided)

Design your information night with the following questions in mind:

- Who is your intended audience?
- How will you invite them?
- What will your classroom look like?
- What are your goals and objectives for the evening?
- What will be the evening's itinerary?
- What information do you hope to gain from your students' families?
- What information do you hope your students' families will gain from you?
- What handouts and visuals will you include?
- How will you determine whether or not the evening was successful?

Sample Information Night for Newcomer Families

Goal 1: To make newcomer students and their families feel welcome in the classroom.

Goal 2: To establish an open-door policy with my students' families.

An invitation in several different languages will be sent home with students with three different dates and times as options for when this event may be held. Parents will be asked to select a time that best suits their schedule. Babysitting and daycare will be provided at the school for families without access to childcare. All members of the family, including students, are welcome to attend.

Light refreshments will be served, students' work will be displayed on the walls, and translators and interpreters will be present. Parents will be informed of the overall educational goals of the classroom (curriculum) and how to help their child with schoolwork. They will also be informed about how to access information about the school, about their children's education, and about how to become more actively involved in the school through volunteer opportunities. Explicit information regarding how to access me (the teacher) after school hours or when an emergency arises will be given. Students' families will have the option of asking questions throughout the evening or of submitting written questions at the end of the evening.

Parents will be given a questionnaire to convey whether or not they felt such an evening was worthwhile. They will also be provided with a handout (translated if necessary) that outlines the information presented and the evening's itinerary.

I hope to learn more about my students by meeting their families and to develop initial contact with the hope that this will lead to better communication.

Activity 3: Personal Reflection

Time: 15 minutes

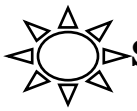
Materials: Pen/pencil, "Personal Reflection" worksheet

Objective: To consider past, present, and future experiences that make newcomers feel welcome in your classroom/school.

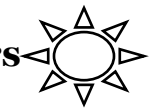
Procedure: On the "Personal Reflection" worksheet, write the strategies you use to make a newcomer family feel welcome in your classroom/school. Is there anything you would change? If a newcomer family were to arrive tomorrow, what strategies would you use to make the family feel welcome?

Personal Reflection

Write the strategies you use to make a newcomer family feel welcome in your classroom/school. Is there anything you would change? If a newcomer family were to arrive tomorrow, what strategies would you use to make the family feel welcome?



Section for Parents and Caregivers
Information for Parents



The DVD chapter on information to parents addresses the following topics:

- Parents' concerns about how well informed they are about their children's education
- Parents' views on accessibility to information regarding their children's school and education
- Schools' responses and attempts to inform parents
- Parents' frustrations with miscommunication and lack of information regarding their children's schooling
- Parents' expectations and assumptions regarding Canadian education
- Differences in curriculum, teaching, and assessment
- Schools' roles and responsibilities to provide parents with information
- Strategies and success stories for helping parents understand the Canadian school system and their children's education

Questions to consider before viewing:

- What information is essential for parents to make an informed choice about their children's education?
- How might relationships between educators and parents be the same or different outside of Canada?
- How might relationships between educators and students be the same or different outside of Canada?
- What information should teachers have about their students and students' families in order to provide a meaningful educational environment?

Questions to consider after viewing:

- What were the major areas of concern highlighted by parents and educators in this segment?
- Are your concerns similar or different to those mentioned in the DVD segment?
- How can information be more accessible to newcomer parents regarding these aspects of their children's education?

Activity: Becoming Informed

Time: 15–30 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil, "Getting Informed" worksheet

Objective: To identify strategies that will help you get information and stay informed about your child's schooling and education.

Procedure: Complete the checklist on the "Getting Informed" worksheet. Answer the questions that follow.

Getting Informed

Put an (X) in the appropriate box.

	True	False
My child's teacher has made a home visit.		
I know the name(s) of my child's teacher(s).		
I feel welcome at my child's school.		
I understand the school's policies and procedures.		
The school explained provincial testing procedures.		
The school holds information nights for parents.		
I am well acquainted with my community's resources.		
I have access to translators and interpreters.		
I am a volunteer at my child's school.		
The behavioural and academic expectations that the school has for my child have been explained to me.		
If I have a concern or question I know who to contact and how.		

Answer these questions

- How easily did you access the information about your child's school?
- What information do you still need from your child's school?
- What did you do to develop a relationship with your child's school and teacher?
- What did you do to make sure you were well informed about your child's academic progress?
- If you could go back in time, what would you do differently regarding your child's education?

Conclusion

Antoinette Gagné & Ranya Khan

Conclusion

What did this study reveal?

The excerpts of interviews of parents and school personnel reveal the increasing need for schools, communities, and parents to build positive, more equitable relationships in order to meet the needs of students. The lack of clarity regarding expectations of parents has the potential to create conflict between parents and schools,. Parents may feel compelled to comply with the school's mandate, yet feel unsure and ill-informed as to how to meet the school's objectives. And teachers may feel frustrated and unsure as to how to fully involve their students' parents. Collaborative partnerships are ideal and necessary to create congruence between students' home and school lives. A true collaborative partnership requires schools to involve parents in their children's education beyond a superficial level.

How do we move forward to ensure positive connections between immigrant families and schools?

Schools need to acknowledge and respond to the diverse attributes of parents and recognize that all parents possess knowledge that can benefit their children's learning. Schools must also recognize the barriers that prevent family involvement, including race, socioeconomic status, the number of years the parents have been in Canada, their prior school experiences, and their cultural and language proficiency. It is essential for schools to inform parents about the school, how it functions, and to maintain a continual dialogue with families that support them in their efforts to participate in their children's schooling. Parents need to seek ways that enable and empower them to advocate on their children's behalf and to communicate with the school.

What did we learn about immigrant families?

While the parents in this video had many similar experiences, there were unique differences based on their culture, religion, and socioeconomic statuses. It is important for schools to recognize these differences, as family involvement becomes ineffective when teachers adopt the same strategies for promoting family involvement irrespective of socioeconomic status, parental needs, and individual differences. By not taking account of differences, the school remains inaccessible to some families and runs the risk of excluding parents.

Who is responsible for building more equitable relationships?

We found that all families cared deeply about their children and wanted to do whatever they could to ensure their success in Canadian schools. However, many parents expressed a need to learn more about the education system to be able to become more actively involved in their children's education at home and at school. Parents in this video spoke honestly and directly about their experiences with the Canadian education system and with their children's schools. Some of their experiences revealed their

frustration, anger, and resentment. Yet, overall, the school personnel and families in this video series expressed a sincere desire to work towards collaborative partnerships and indicated an eagerness to communicate with one another so that past mistakes would not be repeated. Our many conversations with educators and parents revealed that it is the combined responsibility of the immigrant family and the school to work together to meet the educational needs of their children.

Why are the voices of immigrant families and educators important?

By listening to their stories, we have gained a deeper understanding into the perceptions and experiences of schools and families from low-voice immigrant communities. These stories are relevant and important, and present us with a richer perspective that will enable us to work towards bridging the gap between families and schools. Furthermore, it will help us to create more equitable relationships between families and schools, and o work towards educational change that benefits all learners.

Appendices

Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography

Ahearn, C., Childs-Bowen, D., Coady, M., Dickson, K., Heintz, C., Hughes, K., et al. (2002). *The diversity kit: An introductory resource for social change in education*. Retrieved January 22, 2007 from The Education Alliance at Brown University, Teaching Diverse Learners Web site: http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/diversity_kit/index.shtml

The above seems to be a dead link

Part two of the *Diversity Kit*, entitled "Culture" highlights the importance of the teacher's awareness of the student's culture and cultural identity. The fourth chapter in this section entitled "Culture, Family, and Community" explores how to cultivate collaboration with families and communities in order to support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Bassoff, T. (n.d.) How-to: adjust your teaching styles for students in ESL/Bilingual classrooms. Teachers Network. Retrieved January 13, 2007, from http://teachersnetwork.org/ntol/howto/eslclass/eslparents.htm

How-To: Adjust Your Teaching Styles for English Language Learners (ELL) in ESL/Bilingual Classrooms
Note this is different from the title attached to the url above. Should it be changed? (Ted)

This short article highlights the importance of involving ESL parents in the classroom as well as strategies that can be implemented to do so. Bassoff also provides some further resources to consult for hands-on activities in the classroom that help with a community outreach approach.

Beykont, Z. (Editor). (2002). *The power of culture: Teaching across language difference*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

This book is a compilation of writings and research done by several scholars. Aimed toward concerned teachers, administrators, and policy makers, their contributions address three main issues: educational reforms and language minority students, successful teaching across language difference, and preparing teachers to teach across language difference.

Blackledge, A. (2000). *Literacy, power and social justice*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Ltd.

This book discusses the importance of community language literacies in the lives of immigrant learners and their parents. Blackledge shows how full literacy can be

achieved for minority language communities and brings together examples of good practice and recent research.

Blakely, M. M. (1983). Southeast Asian refugee parents: An inquiry into home-school communication and understanding. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. 14(1), 43-68.

Southeast Asian refugee parents in one school district in the Pacific Northwest were interviewed to obtain their perspectives on formal education for their children attending local schools. The author identifies problems faced by refugee families and educators.

Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trust with schools and diverse families: A foundation for lasting partnerships*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved March 1, 2007 from http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003dec/trust.pdf

This book explains obstacles to strong family-school relationships: how to build trust between families and schools, and strategies for engaging all families. Also included are numerous examples and contact information for schools, districts, and parent groups throughout the Northwestern USA who have built trusting school-family relationships.

Brown, S. & Eisterhold, J. (2004). *Topics in language and culture for teachers*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

This is an introductory language and culture text designed for pre-service teachers. The book explores the interrelationship between language and culture and the influence culture has on a person's behaviour, communication, ideas, views, and beliefs. The authors focus on the implications culture has on a classroom context.

Coelho, E. (2004). *Adding English: A guide to teaching in multilingual classrooms*. Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing.

Adding English provides a vivid and descriptive account of the social, educational, and psychological factors that surround learners and educators in multilingual classrooms. Coelho brings a sensitive and detailed perspective to a multidimensional issue that is often relegated to a one-dimensional status with language being the sole focus. This text provides educators with strategies that can be implemented in almost any classroom situation.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools: An integrated approach. Bilingual Education and Bilingualism 13*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

The book outlines approaches and strategies that schools and teachers can adopt to provide educational experiences meeting the needs of all learners in culturally diverse schools and classrooms, especially those in areas in which new immigrants settle.

Corbett. J. (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Clevedon,

England: Multilingual Matters.

This book presents intercultural language education to English language teachers. It provides insight into how teachers can equip their students with the skills to be cultural observers and how to understand the cultures of other people. It also provides a guide on how to conduct and analyze interviews for cultural exploration and on the assessment of intercultural communicative competence.

Crozier, G. (2001). Excluded parents: The deracialisation of parental involvement [1]. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 4(4), 329-341.

Crozier argues that parent involvement policies in British schools are flawed because of their failure to recognize the ethnic diversity of parents and the institutional racism within the educational system. Crozier also suggests that deracialized parent involvement may in the long run contribute to widening the gap between the involved and the uninvolved, the achievers and the underachievers.

Crozier, G. (1999a). Is it a case of 'We know when we're not wanted'? The parents' perspective on parent-teacher roles and relationships. *Educational Research*, 41(3), 315-328.

Interviews with 58 parents (71% working class) and 15 teachers in a British secondary school suggested that working-class parents were committed to children's education but view school as separate from their everyday culture. Parents and teachers viewed their roles as a division of labour, reinforcing parents' view of teachers as professional authorities.

Crozier, G. (1999b). Parents and schools: Partnership or surveillance? *Journal of Education Policy*, 13(1), 125-136.

Crozier interviewed teachers in the United Kingdom to inquire about their views of family involvement and found that teachers viewed middle-class parents as more involved than low-income parents. However, the teachers also felt that family involvement infringed on their professionalism and questioned the lay-professional divide that teachers wanted to maintain.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating Identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (2nd Edition). Los Angeles, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

In *Negotiating Identities*, University of Toronto professor Jim Cummins addresses several issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms. He also goes on to provide strategies for teachers to employ in these diverse environments to help students achieve greater social and academic success.

Daniel-White, K. (2002). Reassessing parent involvement: Involving language minority parents in school work at home. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 18(1), 29-49.

This paper describes an ethnographic investigation of home-based parent involvement as seen through the experience of a Costa Rican family in an African-American community in the North Eastern United States. Using interviews, field notes, and documents, Daniel-White details a specific parental involvement effort initiated in a Latino home through a mini-grant offered by the school district.

DeCapua, A. & Wintergerst, A. C. (2004). *Crossing Cultures in the Language Classroom*. Jackson TN: University of Michigan Press.

Topics discussed in the book include introduction to culture, more on culture, culture shock, nonverbal communication, societal roles, and pragmatics. Each of the six chapters ends with three useful sections: Questions for Study and Discussion, Practice: What Activities Show Us, and Further Readings (a list of articles and books relevant to the topic[s] discussed in the chapters). The goals of this book for the teacher educator are to expand cultural awareness, to acquire an in-depth understanding of what culture is and its relationship to language, and to comprehend and implement observations of cultural similarities and differences.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*. 100(1), 20-46.

This four-year study in a southern California school district examines parent involvement activities affecting about 100 families aiming to encourage Spanish-speaking parents to participate more fully in their children's schooling. Unconventional activities validating families' social and cultural experience are more successful than conventional means of encouraging parent participation.

Epstein, J. L. (2006). *Epstein's framework of six types of involvement*. Baltimore: Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools.

The document offers an updated version of Epstein's framework of six types of parental involvement, highlighting new definitions of key concepts. It also outlines sample practices, challenges, and expected outcomes for students, parents, and teachers.

Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1991). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*. 91(3), 289-305.

The authors studied connections between parent involvement programs, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' practices in inner-city elementary and middle schools. They examined patterns according to academic subject, classroom organization, and level of support for parent involvement, finding that each variable has implications for the strengths of school programs and teachers' practices.

Epstein, J. L. (1986). Parent involvement: Implications for limited English proficient parents. In C. Simich-Dudgeon (Ed.), *Issues of parent involvement*. Proceedings of symposium held at Trinity College, Washington, D.C.

A survey of teachers, parents, and school administrators concerning the types of parent involvement in the schools and classrooms revealed five major forms of parent participation. The school's efforts should be designed to help parents understand the school's practices and the children's opportunities, and to help the school understand the families' cultures, strengths, and goals.

Finders, M. & Lewis, C. (1994). "Why some parents don't come to school". *Educational Leadership*, 51(8), 50-54.

Too often, parents' social, economic, linguistic, and cultural practices are represented as serious problems, rather than as valued knowledge. Some parents do not feel comfortable in the teachers' domain. Schools can help by clarifying how parents can help, encouraging them to be assertive, developing trust, building on home experience, and using parent expertise.

Fine, M. (1993). [Ap]parent involvement: Reflections on parents, power, and urban public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 94(4), 682-729.

With this article, Michelle Fine hopes to provoke a broad-based conversation about urban public school reform,asking how parents are being positioned as subjects, but also as objects, of a struggle to resuscitate the public sphere of public education.

Fitzpatrick, F. (1987). *Multilingual matters: The open door*. Exeter: Short Run Press.

The Open Door is a case study investigating young South Asian ESL students. In addition to the findings of the study, the community context, educational/school context, teaching & learning processes, and the language education of young bilingual children are discussed.

Flaitz, J. (2006). *Understanding your refugee and immigrant students: An educational, cultural, and linguistic guide*. Jackson TN: University of Michigan Press.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first one occupies almost two thirds of the book and focuses on the educational and cultural backgrounds of Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Egypt, Haiti, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, People's Republic of China, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The second part provides some detail about the linguistic features of the languages adopted in these countries.

Flett, A., & Conderman, G. (2001). Enhance the involvement of parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Intervention in School and Clinic,* 37(1), 53-55.

Flett and Conderman present twenty strategies for enhancing the involvement of parents from diverse backgrounds, including: exploring parents' expectations, learning about the family's culture, and providing communication in many forms.

Fulton, J. M., Golden, L., Smallwood, B. A., & Savage, K. L. (nd). *Parenting for academic success: A curriculum for families learning English*. National Center Family Literacy. Delta-Systems Co., Inc. http://www.delta-systems.com/proddetail.cfm?cat=1&toc=91&stoc=0&pronum=3372

Parenting for Academic Success: A Curriculum for Families Learning English is a 12–unit curriculum designed for parents who are non–native speakers of English. Its goals are two–fold: 1) to develop the English language skills of parents and 2) to increase the ability of parents to support the language and literacy development of their children in kindergarten through grade three. The curriculum has two components—a set of *Parent Workbooks* for all 12 units and a comprehensive *Teacher's Resource Manual*.

Giba, M. A. (1999). Forging partnerships between parents and teachers. *Principal*. 78(3), 33-35.

A former principal of Cielo Vista Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, Mary Anna Giba offers a short narrative account of her efforts to promote parent involvement at her school. This document includes strategies for building effective parent-teacher relationships.

Greenwood, G. E., & Hickman, C. W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *The Elementary School Journal*. 91(3), 279-288.

Discusses the nature of parent involvement, barriers to parent involvement, and ways to overcome these barriers. Teachers interact with the parent as audience, volunteer, paraprofessional, teacher of hihe/sher own child, learner, and decision maker. Ten recommendations for teacher education are offered.

Grossman, H. (2007). *Necessary conversation about English language learners: Templates for success*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems Co.

This is a workbook that will support school administrators and educators in the effort to communicate effectively about issues such as cultural diversity and creating a welcoming environment. The scenarios address elementary, secondary, and adult education levels.

Hamayan, E., & Freeman, R. (Eds.). (2006). *English language learners at school: A guide for administrators*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

This book is a practical guide that administrators and educators can use to evaluate their school's program for ELLs, identify strengths and needs of their program and practices, and develop strategies for action. Chapter 2 focuses on strategies for building relationships between the school and community as well as how to communicate with parents in ways that they can understand.

Henderson, A. T., & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. St. Louis, MO: Danforth Foundation and Flint, MI: Mott (C. S.) Foundation.

This report presents a collection of research papers on the function and importance of family to a student's achievement and education in school and the community. The research is divided into two categories: (1) studies on programs and interventions from early childhood through high school, including school policy, and (2) studies on family processes.

Hints on working with new arrival refugee immigrant families at your library. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2006 from http://www.kcls.org/clc/APP%20C-4-4%20Hints%20on%20working%20with%20new%20arrival.pdf

This document was created by the King Country Library System for librarians. However, its content is useful for educators as it provides multiple strategies to prepare them to welcome and communicate with new arrival refugee immigrant families.

Hoover-Dempsey, K., Walker, J. M. T., Jones, K. P., & Reed, R. P. (2000). Teach involving parents (TIP): Result of an in-service teacher education program for enhancing parental involvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(7), 843-867.

Assessed the effectiveness of a program designed to enhance practicing teachers' beliefs, skills, and strategies regarding parent involvement. Results of an initial test of the program in two U.S. public schools serving predominantly high-risk students indicated that participation increased teachers' self-efficacy and enhanced their beliefs about parents' efficacy for helping children learn as well as their invitations to parents to participate.

Houk, F. (2005). *Supporting English language learners: A guide for teachers and administrators*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Supporting English Language Learners is a guide designed for teachers and administrators that provides instruction for how to meet English language learners' needs. Houk gives hands-on teaching ideas and outlines underlying themes behind successful English language learner programs. Specific sections are devoted to classroom matters, advocacy, and creating a context for working with other staff and building home-school partnerships.

Hughes, P., & MacNaughton, G. (2001). Building equitable staff-parent communication in early childhood settings: An Australian case study. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*. 3(2), 1-19.

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of early childhood staff from a variety of early childhood settings in Australia regarding their experiences with the federal government's Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme (QIAS). The findings revealed that participants were consistently ambivalent about involving parents in their program because developing a shared understanding with parents about what was in the best interests of their child was neither easy nor guaranteed.

Huss-Keeler, R. L. (1997). Teacher perception of ethnic and linguistic minority parental involvement and its relationship to children's language and literacy learning: A case study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(2), 171-182.

A yearlong ethnographic study of a British multiethnic primary school examined the influence of teacher perception of Pakistani parent involvement and interest in their children's education on teacher expectation of the children's language and literacy achievement. Findings showed that teachers misinterpreted cultural differences in parents' demonstration of interest and often underestimated children's learning and achievement.

Hwa-Froelich, D. A., & Westby, C. E. (2003). Frameworks of education: Perspectives of Southeast Asian parents and Head Start staff. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools,* 34(4), 299-319.

This study found that Asian parents, Southeast Asian parents, and Head Start staff were unaware of differences in their beliefs and values in the area of education, parenting, child learning, and disabilities. This led to confusion and misunderstanding.

Illinois State Board of Education. (2003). *Involving immigrant and refugee families in their children's schools: Barriers, challenges, and successful strategies.* Retrieved January 16, 2007 from http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/involving_ families.pdf

This report, written in 2003, represents effective strategies to assist schools to reach out to refugee and other immigrant parents.

Joshi, A., Eberly, J., & Konzal, J. (2005). Dialogue across cultures: Teachers' perceptions about communication with diverse families. *Multicultural Education*. 13(2), 11-15.

The authors assess teachers' perceptions about communication with diverse families. They add to the literature on how parents and teachers can work together to build common expectations and to support student learning.

Keyes, C. R. (2002). Parent-teacher partnerships: A theoretical approach for teachers. In D. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Issues in early childhood education: Curriculum, teacher education, and dissemination of information* (pp. 107-118). Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Retrieved January 14, 2007, from http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/katzsym/keyes.html

This paper discusses the research on parent-teacher partnerships, including factors that affect the development of effective parent-teacher partnerships. The paper also presents a theoretical framework that teachers can use to enhance parent-teacher partnerships.

Lahman, M. K. E., & Park, S. (2004). Understanding children from diverse cultures: Bridging of parents and teachers. *International Journal of Early Years Education,* 12(2), 131-142.

This is a case study that explores how Korean and Chinese families negotiate their perspectives with U.S. teachers regarding school.

Lange, D. L., & Paige, R. M. (Eds.), (2003). *Culture as the core: Perspectives on culture in second language learning*. Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

This book presents the issue of integrating culture into the second language classroom. The authors argue that culture is the core of language learning/acquisition.

Lareau, A. & McNamara Horvat, E. (1999). Moments of social inclusion and exclusion race, class and cultural capital in family-school relationships. *Sociology of Education*, 72(1), 37-53.

Presents a study of parents' involvement with their children that reveals how some black parents, concerned about the legacy of discrimination against blacks in schooling, approach schools critically. Extends the results to a theoretical discussion of interactions of moments of inclusion or exclusion with activation of social and cultural capital.

Law, B. (2000). *The more than just surviving handbook: ESL for every classroom teacher*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Portage and Main Press.

This handbook directs educators with ideas on how to marshal their wealth of pedagogical knowledge and skills and the resources of the school and community to assist ESL students "more than just survive" in Canadian schools.

Lawson, M. A. (2003). School-Family relations in context: Parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement. *Urban Education*, 38(1), 77-133.

Examined teachers' and parents' perceptions of the meanings and functions of parent involvement. Data from interviews with teachers and parents indicated that the two groups had different perceptions of parent involvement. These different perceptions implicated diverse epistemologies, differential power, and some competing purposes.

Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education, and staff development.* Washington, DC: Teaching for Change.

Classroom lesson plans, staff development activities, reflections on teaching, and an extensive resource guide for K-12 educators who want to go beyond the "heroes and holidays" approach to multicultural education. Features the work of leading scholars, including Jim Cummins, Christine Sleeter, Beverly Tatum, Sonia Nieto, Peggy McIntosh, Luis Rodriguez, Lisa Delpit, and Louise Derman-Sparks.

Lindle, J. C. (1989). What do parents want from principals and teachers? *Educational Leadership*, 47(2), 12-14.

According to a Pittsburgh study, all families, regardless of socioeconomic status, have similar preferences concerning the nature and conduct of school communications. Parents view a "professional," businesslike manner as undesirable, whereas a personal touch (or timely information presented informally) is most likely to win their esteem.

Lucas, T. (1997). *Into, through, and beyond secondary school: Critical transitions for immigrant youths*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems Co.

This text is the first in a series, entitled *Topics in Immigrant Education*. Specifically focusing on the secondary years, Lucas outlines issues newcomer adolescents face with scholastic and cultural transitions. She provides insight for educators on how to foster relationships with these students and their families to promote academic success.

Martin-Jones, M., & Saxena, M. (1995). Supporting or containing bilingualism? Policies, power asymmetries, and pedagogic practices in mainstream primary classrooms. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Power and inequality in language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In *Power and Inequality in Language Education*, Tollefson assembles the work of twelve scholars who explore the relationship between language policy, wealth, and power. Their original research demonstrates how language planning and education reflect existing inequalities in the distribution of economic, political, and social power, and how language policy is used to obtain and maintain power.

McQuillan, J., & Tse, L. (1995). Child language brokering in linguistic minority communities: Effects on cultural interaction, cognition, and literacy. *Language and Education,* 9(3), 195-215.

This study examines the contexts of cultural interaction and the development of cognition and language among language minority children who brokered for their limited-English-speaking parents. Nine research participants who brokered for their parents as children were interviewed to determine the effects of brokering.

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner: ESL/ELD Companion*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved January 11, 2007 from http://www.ocup.org/resources/documents/companions/esleld2002.pdf

This is an online version of the ESL/ELD curriculum document designed for Ontario teachers. It outlines terminology, gives a background for ESL/ELD teaching, and covers several issues newcomer students and families face when arriving in Ontario. In addition to providing strategies for effective program delivery, the roles of the school, teacher, and parent are also highlighted.

Miretzky, D. (2004). The communication requirements of democratic schools: Parent-teacher perspectives on their relationships. *Teachers College Record*. 106(4), 814-851.

This article argues for the recognition of the importance of talk among parents and teachers both as a research methodology and as a desirable outcome in creating and sustaining democratic communities that support school improvement. The study found that parents and teachers may routinely frame the meanings of their encounters in terms of the children they have in common. However, it appears that what they look for from each other is clearly connected to what they need for themselves as people who share in a community that reflects democratic values.

Munn, P. (1985). Accountability and parent-teacher communication. *British Educational Research Journal*. 11(2), 105-111.

Drawing on recent research on accountability, Munn argues that parents are predominately interested in different kinds of information than that available to them, and that parents' perception of teachers as experts inhibits them obtaining this information. It suggests that recent legislation has made it more difficult for parents to obtain the information they want by placing parent-teacher relationships in a combative framework and by encouraging teachers to retreat behind a smokescreen of professionalism.

Olivos, E. M. (2006). *The power of parents: A critical perspective of bicultural parent involvement in public schools*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

This book provides information on bicultural parents in the school system, a transformative model of parent engagement, and a case study of transformational parent involvement. It also addresses racism and deficit thinking in parent involvement and tensions in culture, knowledge, and power.

Olmstead, P. P., & Rubin, R. I. (1982). Linking parent behaviours to child achievement: Four evaluation studies from the parent education follow-through programs. *Studies in Educational Evaluation,* 8(3), 317-325.

Four evaluation studies concerning the relationship between parent behaviours/attitudes and child achievement are presented. In each study, parental data were obtained either by direct observation or lengthy face-to-face interviews. In all four studies, significant relationships were found between parental measures and child achievement.

Park, F. W. (2001). *FINE forum e-newsletter: Teacher talk*. Retrieved, August 6, 2006, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/fineforum/forum2/teachertalk.html

Frederick Won Park shares his strategies for reaching out to diverse families and preparing student teachers to support families.

People for Education. (2005). *Tips for parents: High school courses and choices*. Retrieved January 6, 2007 from http://www.peopleforeducation.com/resources/tipsheets/English.pdf

This question and answer sheet is available in several different languages. It is designed to inform parents of students in Ontario high schools how to assist their children with academic and career planning.

Public Broadcasting System. (2006). *PBS Parents*. Retrieved January 15, 2007, from http://www.pbs.org/parents/

This website offers a variety of resources for parents, including resources on parent-teacher relationships.

Richards, J. (1994). *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Educating Second Language Children is based on the work of leading researchers in elementary education. Going beyond classroom instruction, Richards addresses the role of the school, family, and community and how important they are in terms of newcomer students and a successful education.

Rosenthal, D. M., & Sawyers, J. Y. (1996). Building successful home/school partnerships: Strategies for parent support and involvement. *Childhood Education*. 72, 194-200.

Written for teachers and administrators, this article provides several strategies for promoting collaboration with parents. The authors suggest a number of questions educators can ask of themselves to get a sense of how "family-friendly" they are.

Scarcella, R. (1990). *Teaching language minority students in the multicultural classroom*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

This text is a general guide for teaching ESL students. Designed for teachers, administrators, and anyone working with English language learners in all grades, Scarcella's text provides strategies to use in the classroom and covers a wide variety of issues, including maximizing minority parent participation in schools.

Schwartz, W. (1995). *A guide to communicating with Asian American families: For parents/about parents*. Retrieved August 6, 2006, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/26/9e/6a.pdf

This guide describes how the backgrounds and cultures of the various Asian and Pacific Islander groups affect their attitudes and behaviour.

Settlement.Org. (2007, January 18). *Education*. Retrieved from http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/

The Education section of the Settlement.Org website provides valuable information for both educators and families. Information includes how to get a translator, procedures for enrolling children in school, links to information on where to go to improve English skills for parents, and a copy of the "Newcomers' Guide to Education in Ontario."

Stanley, K. (2004). *The role of the teacher, the role of the learner, the role of technologies: Finding balance in the classroom*. Retrieved August 6, 2006, from http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej28/f1.html

This website highlights a discussion on ESL/EFL classroom pedagogy, which looks in particular at the role of the teacher as it emerges through the new technologies we are incorporating into our lives. It also revisits older questions of the role each of us plays in the learning process.

Statistics Canada. (2007, January 20). http://www.statscan.ca

Provides information such as community profiles, census data, summary tables, geographic data, and publications.

Steinbach, S. (Producer/Director). (1999). *Voices of experience: Cross cultural adjustment* [Video]. Davis, CA: The Seabright Group.

This 38-minute video relates the stories of more than a dozen international students and business people who have lived in the United States for about one year. Stories of culture shock, personal change, and homesickness are told, along with how adjustments were made in their new situations. Other topics include teaching styles in the American classroom, eating habits, manners, lifestyles, expression of affection in public places, cohabitation, individuality, communication patterns, punctuality, safe vs. dangerous environments, traffic laws, and informality.

The Oregon Parent Training and Information Center. (1997). *How can parent-teacher differences be prevented or resolved?* Retrieved January 5, 2007, from http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/conferencematerials/sped/2005/howcanparent.doc

Parents and teachers share responsibility for creating a working relationship that fosters children's learning. This brochure examines the cultural context for parent-teacher relationships and suggests some general strategies for creating a climate in which misunderstandings and disagreements between parents and teachers can be minimized through communication. It also discusses some general principles for parents and teachers in dealing with misunderstandings or disagreements as they arise.

Toronto City Summit Alliance. (2007, January 12). *Issues facing our city: Economic integration of immigrant families*. Retrieved from http://www.torontoalliance.ca/urban_challenges/economic_integration

This article is an important read for educators as it draws attention to some of the issues immigrant families face upon arriving in Canada. Specifically, this article addresses the barriers skilled immigrants face when trying to attain suitable employment that matches their qualifications.

Tse, L. (1996). Language brokering in linguistic minority communities: The case of Chinese- and Vietnamese-American students. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 20(3/4), 485-498.

The purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence of language brokering among Chinese- and Vietnamese-American bilingual students, and to explore the linguistic, cultural, and affective factors associated with brokering. The results suggest that nearly all of the research participants brokered for a variety of people in the home and at school, among many other settings, and that brokering has a number of affective and linguistic consequences for language minority students.

Violand-Sanchez, E., Sutton, C. P., & Ware, H. W. (1991). Fostering home-school cooperation: Involving language minority families as partners in education. *NCBE program Information Guide Series*, 6. Retrieved January 31, 2007 from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/pigs/pig6.htm

This monograph has been designed to provide useful information about parent involvement in general and about practical strategies for developing partnerships with language minority parents in particular. A framework is presented for fostering cooperation between home and school, given the special factors that should be considered as non-native English speaking families become more familiar with their new communities.

Witmer, M. M. (2005). The fourth R in education: Relationships. *The Clearing House*. 78(5), 224-228.

This article proposes concrete strategies each stakeholder (teacher educators, teacher candidates, teachers, and administrators) can implement to ensure effective parent-teacher relationships.

Wittreich, Y. V., Jacobi, E. F, & Hogue, I. E., (2003). *Getting parents involved: A handbook of ideas for teachers, schools and communities*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers.

Intended as a guide for all educators associated with parent involvement--especially classroom teachers--this resource handbook addresses the issues and concerns of parents in school programs.

Appendix B: Growing New Roots: Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of Their Children

Appendix C: Mandarin Translation

让沟通与合作在学校和社区中生根发芽：来自移民家庭和其孩子老师的声音

背景介绍：

在多伦多有一组教育工作者和研究人员通过焦点小组访谈的方式，对移民家长和教师之间的关系进行了研究。该研究的访谈对象包括移民家长，教师、校长、和各社区协助新移民安居辅导员。

我们制作该光碟和手册的目的是希望增进移民及难民家庭和教育工作者之间的理解，加强教育工作者和家长之间的接触和交流，并根据家长和学校提供的情况促进教育内容、相关政策和教学实践的改革。

参与人员：

该光碟的参与人员包括来自不同社区的移民家长和学校老师、校长、及各社区协助新移民安居辅导员。
被邀请参与本研究的移民社区有如下六个：

- 中文普通话社区
- 俄语社区
- 索马里语社区
- 乌尔都语社区
- 阿拉伯语社区
- 加勒比社区

我们挑选这几个社区参与我们的研究是因为他们被识别为“低声音的移民社区”。

所谓**低声音的移民社区**是指

》几乎没有自己的组织机构
》更需要帮助、有更多的新移民

内容

本光碟和手册共分八大部分：

1. **内容介绍**
2. **语言**
3. **文化理解**
4. **沟通**
5. **建立教师和家长之间的关系**

6. **学校和家庭的角色**
7. **供家长和监护人参考的信息**
8. **结论**

每一章

- 针对本光碟中收录的来自不同**低声音移民社区**家庭的经历、感受、观点、和焦点问题，提出独特的见解，
- 针对如何使得学校和社区共同努力排除妨碍交流的障碍的问题，提供资讯，
- 促进包容式教学实践，从而鼓励和促进家长积极参与孩子的教育

语言问题：当教育工作者和移民家庭不讲同一种语言时该怎么办？

一位教国语的老师说，
“我认为最大的障碍是语言。如果你在学校没有人能听懂你的语言，作为家长，你知道，即使想问一个最基本的问题都会感觉很糟糕。”

文化理解问题：教育工作者该如何帮助新移民家长和孩子度过文化适应期？

一位乌尔都语家长说，“什么也不懂！那时我们刚来……
因为宗教信仰的不同，因为我们来自不同的地方，我们夹在巴基斯坦和加拿大之间，我们的生活方式和文化跟这里相比有很大不同，因此造成很多困难。大家不懂彼此在说什么！我们就在想：我们这是到了哪儿啦？”

沟通问题：在新移民家庭和其孩子的学校之间存在着哪些沟通上的障碍？

一位讲普通话的家长说道：“学校从来都没有象我们今天这样把大家召集起来一起开个会，谈谈如何帮助新移民家庭和学校接触交流、一起讨论如何教育小孩子、如何适应加拿大。这是个多元文化的国家，我们该如何帮助新移民适应这里的生活呢？我感觉这方面学校做的不够、没有召开过讨论这方面问题的会。”

建立关系问题：教育工作者如何与家长建立有效、平等的关系？

一位教索马里语的老师说，“我觉得打开校门政策很重要。因为如果你每次来，学校大门总关着、你总得预约才能来，还得等上个把星期…那样谁还来呀。如果家长能随便进出，随叫随到，那样你一有什么问题就可以把家长找来马上解决问题…… 我常见到家长进来打招呼。我觉得这太重要了。”

学校和家庭的角色：在加拿大的教学环境中教师的角色是什么？在这一问题上与移民家庭的期望有何不同？

一位讲索马里语的家长说，“这里的教师所担当的角色和我们在索马里的教师所担当的角色不同。我相信索马里的教师是既当家长又当老师，而加拿大的老师只是担当教师的角色而已，这一点与我们老家的老师大不相同…… 这种情形让我们感觉很困难、要适应这种情形也很困难。”

供家长和监护人参考的信息：家长和监护人需要了解有关加拿大学校和教育制度的哪些信息以便其为孩子的教育作出了解情况的决定？

一位讲俄语的家长说，“也就是说既然我们已在原来的国家经历了两种不同的学校制度，我们本期望在这里找到相同的学校制度。老实说，我们压根都没想到会有如此大的差异。差异是如此巨大，我们认识到我们的错误时已为时过晚……”

本光碟文字资料和手册可在如下网站免费下载：http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca

如果您想获得一份光碟和手册，请与多伦多大学教育学院副教授Antoinette Gagne博士联系：agagne@oise.utoronto.ca

欢迎您与我们分享您在家庭和学校合作中的经历：

我们很愿意倾听您在家庭和学校之间建立和保持合作伙伴关系的故事和经历。为了更好地了解学校和家长都在为此做些什么，**我们邀请您写一小段与您有关的家庭和学校合作伙伴关系的亲身经历。**理解并学习其他学校和家庭的做法会有助于教育工作者和家庭建立更好的相互关系。请把您的故事和经历寄给 Antoinette Gagné 。

Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
OISE/UT
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto
Ontario
M5S 1V6
agagne@oise.utoronto.ca

您也可以直接把您的故事上传到如下网站： http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/stories.asp

Appendix D: Russian Translation

Appendix E: Somali Translation

Beela Cusub oo Ku soo Kordhaaya Bulshada: Codadka Qoysaska Socotada ah iyo Macallimiinta Caruurtooda

Gogoldhig: Koox ka kooban cilmi baarayaal iyo barayaal ee magaaladda Toronto ayaa waxay wareeysi tixane ah la yeesheen kooxo la soo xulay si loo baaro xiriirka u dhexeeya qoysaska socotada ah, kuwa soo qaxay, macallimiinta, maamulayaasha iyo adegayaasha dejinta oo la shaqeeyo bulshooyinkan.

DVD iyo buug yar ayaa la sameeyey waxaa looga rajo qabaa in ay hirgelin doonaan sidii ay isugu dhaqan garan lahayeen qoysaska soo guuray, kuwa soo qaxay iyo barayaasha dugsiga, iyo si loo dhiiri geliyo is dhexgal balaaran oo dhex mara qoysaska iyo barayaasha kuna dhaliya horumarin barnaamijyo, nidaam iyo tijabooyin leh kuna saleeysan wargelin laga helay waalidiinta iyo barayaasha dugsiga

Ka qeybgalayaalka: Ka qeybgalayaalka DVDiigan waxaa ka mid ah waalidiin laga soo xulay beelaha socotada iyo qaxootiga ah iyo macallimiin, maamulayaal dugsi iyo adegayaal dejinta bulshada

- Beelaha socotada iyo qaxootiga la soo xulay waxaa ka mid ah
- Beesha ku hadasha afka Mandariinka
- Beesha ku hadasha afka Ruushka
- Beesha ku hadasha afka Soomaaliga
- Beesha ku hadasha afka Urduga
- Beesha ku hadasha afka Carabiga
- Beelaha Kariibiyenka

Kooxahaan kor ku xusan ayaa la soo xushay waayo waxaa loo oqoonsaday in ay yihiin beelaha socotada ah oo aan codkooda la maqal.

Beelaha socotada oo aan codkooda la maqal:

- Waxay leeyihiin ururro aad u tira yar
- Waxay qabaan baahi fara badan, waxayna ka kooban yihiin dadyow dhowaan soo galay dalkaan

Nuxur
DVDiigan iyo buugiisa waxay ka kooban yihiin sideed qaybood:
1- hordhac
2- luuqadda
3- isdhaqan garad
4- wadahadal
5- xiriir la dhiso
6- doorarka dugsiyada iyo qoysaska
7- wararka waalidiinta la siinayo
8- gunnaanad

Qaayb kasta

- waxay si qota dheer kuu tusaysaa waayo aragtinimada, aragtida iyo arrimaha u gaarka ah beelaha socotada iyo kuwa qaxootiga ah oo codkooda aan la maqal ee DVDgan looga hadlayo
- waxaay ku siinaysaa warbixin ku saabsan sida dugsiyada iyo belaha u wada shaqayn karaan isagana qaadi karaan caqabada hakinaysa is afgaradka iyo
- waxay sare u qaadaysaa howl qabad loo dhanyahay oo waalidiinta ku dhiirri gelineysa sidii ay uga qeyb qaadanlahaayeen wax barashada caruurtooda

Luuqadda: Maxaad sameeyn kartaa markii barayaasha iyo qoysaska socotada ah aysan ku wada hadlin isku af?
"*Waxaan u maleeynayaa in afku uu yahay caqabadda ugu weyn waayo hadduna waalidku ku haysan dugsiga qof afgaranaya ma uu jecleysanayo, waayo waxaa ku adkaaneyso xataa in uu waydiyo sua'aal iska caadi ah"* Waxaa yiri macallin wax bara arday ku hadasha afka Mandarinka

Is-dhaqangarad: Sideey barayaasha ugu sahli karaan qoysaska cusub iyo ardayda in ay la qabsadaan dhaqanka dalkaan?
" Majiraan wax macna sameynaya! Markii ugu horeysay oo aan nimid dalkan…..waayo farqi weyn ayaa u dhexeeya sida looga noolyahay meesha aan ka nimid Pakistan iyo Kanada haddii loo eego xagga diinta iyo xagga dhaqankaba. Qofku waxba ma fahmi karo! Waxaan ka fekereynaa, xageebaan nimid?" Waxaa yiri waalid ku hadla afka Urduga.

Wadahadal: Waa maxay caqabadaha ka jira wadahadal dhexmara qoysaska dhowaan yimid iyo dugsiga carruurtoodu dhigato?
"Dugsiga kama dhici jirin fadhiyo la oranayo waxaan caawa la kulmidoonnaa qoysaska dalka dhawaan yimid si looga caawimo xiriirka dugsiga ay la yeelanayaan, loogana wada hadlo sidii caruurtooda wax loo bari lahaa islamarkaana ula qabsanlahaayeen Kanada. Halkani waa dal dhaqama kala duwan leh. Sidee waalidka dhawaan soo galay uga caawimikarnaa in uu la qabsado dhaqanka dalkan. Ma u maleynaayo in dugsiga lagu qabtay kulamo looga hadlayo arrimo noocan ah. Waxaa yiri waalid ku hadla afka Mandarinka

Xiriir la dhiso: Sidee barayaasha iyo waalidiinta u dhisi karaan xiriir wax tarma leh qof kastana raali gelinkara.
"*Waxay ila tahay in loo bahan yahay in la helo nidaam albaabkiisu furanyahay. Maxaayeelay haddii maamulka dugsiga albaabkiisu mar waliba xiran yahay, adiguna aad u baahantahay in aad ballan qabsato si aad ula kulantid maamulka, taasoo qaadan karta toddobaad iyo wax ka badan…ma shaqayneyso. Haddii uu waalid dhibaato haysato kuu yimaado, isla markaas ayaad qaabili kartaa…Waxaan arkay waalidiin horey ka salaamayo markii ay xaafiiska soo galaan….Waxay ila tahay in taasu muhiim tahay"* Waxaa yiri macallin u dhiga arday ku hadasha afka Soomaaliga

Doorarka: Waa maxay doorka macallinka markii la eego nidaamka Kanada, sideeyse uga duwan tahay hanka ay qabaan qoysaska dhawaan soo guuray ?
"Doorka macallinka halkan la mid maaha midka Soomaaliya jooga. Waxay ila tahay macallinka Somalia jooga laba door ayuu ciyaari jiray, midka waalidka iyo midka macallinka. Laakiinse macallinka Kanada jooga waxuu ciyaaraa xilka macallinnimada oo keliyah taasoo aan la mid ahayn tii aan uga baranay macallimiintii joogay dalkeenii. Waa marxalad aad u adag si loola qabsadana ay aad u adag tahay…." Waxaa yiri waalid ku hadla afka Soomaaliga.

Wargelinta waalidiinta: Waa maxay akhbaarta ku saabsan dugsiga iyo nidaamka waxbaridda Kanadianka oo ay walidiinta iyo daryeelayaasha u baahanyihiin si ay uga gaaraan go'aan rasmi ah waxbarashada carrurtooda?
" *Waa isla sidii ayaan is iri, madama aan soo marnay laba dugsi oo kala duwan, waxaan filaynay in uu nidaamka halkaan la mid yahay kii aan ka nimid. Sida daacadda ah, marna ma anan filayn in nidaamka waxbarashada uu aad u kala duwanyahay. Aad buu u kala duwan yahay, markii aan fahamneyna waxba lagama qaban karin qaladkii aan horey u sameeynay…..*" Waxaa yiri waalid ku hadla afka Ruushka.

DVDiiga iyo buugga waxaad ku heli kartaa qarash la'aan haddii aad takto websaytka soo socda http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca

Waxaad kaloo helikartaa copyga DVDiiga iyo buugga haddii aad la xiriirtid Dr. Antoinette Gagné (Associate Professor, OISE, University of Toronto)
agagne@oise.utoronto.ca

La Wadaag Waayo Aragtinimadaada Isbaheysiga Qoyska iyo Dugsiga
Waxaan jeclaan laheen in aad noo sheegtaan sheekooyin iyo waayo aragtinimadiina si loo kobciyo horana loo mariyo isbaheeysiga qoyska iyo skoolka. Si aad u ogaatan waxyaabaha skoolaadka iyo qoysaska ay ku howlanyihiin, **waxaan idinka codsaneeynaa in aad noo soo qortaan sheeko gaaban oo ku saabsa waayo aragtinimadiinna isbahaysiga ka dhexeeya qoyska iyo dugsiga.** In la fahmo lana ogaado waxyabaha dugsiyada kale iyo qoysasaka ay qabteen, waxay caawinaysaa barayaalka iyo qoysaska si ay dhexdooda uga abuuraan xiriir wanagsan. Waxaan idinka codsaneeynaa in aad noogu soo dirtaan e-mailkaan shekooyinkiina iyo waayo aragtinimadiina.

Antoinette Gagné
Qaybta Kuriculumka Wahdhigidda iyo Waxbarashada
OISEU/UT
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1V6
agagne@oise.uttoronto.ca
Ama ugu soo dir ESL. Infusion Website at
http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/stories.asp

Appendix F: Urdu Translation

Appendix G: Arabic Translation

:المجتمع في نمو جديدة جذور
أولادهم ومعلمي المهاجرة الأسر أصوات

□□□□□:

جماعية مقابلات بعدة تورنتو جامعة من الباحثين والأساتذة من فريق قام بالمعلمين كندا إلى والملاجئ المهاجرين الأمور أولياء علاقة لإختبار المهاجرة الجاليات وإستقرار مساعدة على والقائمين المدارس وناظري المختلفة الثقافات عن الوعي نشر بهدف وكتيب DVD إصدار تم وقد ناحية من والملاجئ المهاجرين أسر بين
الأسر تلك بين التفاعل تشجيع وذلك ، أخرى ناحية من والمعلمين على بناء والممارسات والسياسات البرامج تطوير في والإسهام والمعلمين المدارس ومعلمي الأمور أولياء من مستفادةالمعلومات.

□□ □□□□□□

كندا إلى والملاجئة المهاجرة الجاليات بعض من أسر DVDال هذا في يشترك وإستقرار مساعدة على عاملون موظفون وآخرون مدارس وناظر معلمون وكذلك الجاليات تلك.

التالية الجاليات إختيارتم الصدد هذا وفي:

- لمتحدثة بالمندرين .الجالية
- الجالية المتحدثة بالروسية .
- الجالية المتحدثة بالصومالية.
- الجالية المتحدثة بالاردو .
- الجالية المتحدثة بالعربية .
- الجالية المتحدثة بالكريبية .

وتم إختيار الجاليات المذكورة أعلاه بإعتبارهم من الجاليات ذات الصوت المحدودة والتي تحددها المعايير التالية: الخافت والمشاركة الإجتماعية

- قلة المؤسسات الخاصة بالجالية .
- الحاجة الذائدة لخدمات وسبة عالية منها مهاجرين جدد .

<u>المحتويات</u>:

يتكون الـ DVD والكتيب من ثمان أجزاء :

1. المقدمة
2. اللغة
3. الوعى الثقافى
4. التواصل
5. بناء العلاقات
6. دور المدارس والأسر
7. معلومات لأولياء الأمور ومقدمي الرعاية
8. خاتمة

والاجزاء تقدم ما يلى :

- وأمور خاصة بكل من الجاليات المهاجرة توضيح خبرات ووجهات نظر واللاجئة المتضمنة بالشريط .
- تيسير وتوضيح كيفية التعاون بين المدارس والجاليات لإزالة العوائق بيان التواصل .
- إظهار الأنشطة التى تشجع مشاركة أولياء الأمور فى عمليات تعليم أبنائهم .

مختلفة عن لغة الأسر المهاجرة اللغة : ماذا تفعل عندما تكون لغة المعلمين ؟

قال أحد مدرسى الطلاب المتحدثين بالمندرين : " أعتقد أن اللغة عائق كبير وإن لم تكن تعرف أحد فى المدرسة يتحدث باللغة الأم يكون الأمر مزعجاً لهم ... وكما تعلم يكون الأمر هكذا حتى مع أبسط الأسئلة ".

على المعلمين تسهيل عملية التأقلم الوعى الثقافى : كيف يستطيع الإجتماعى للأسر والطلاب حديثى الهجرة إلى كندا ؟

يقول أحد الآباء المتحدثين بالاردو :" كانت الأمور غامضة حين وصلنا إلى كندا لأن هناك فروق كبيرة فى ديانتنا ومنشأنا ... فهناك فرق كبير بين باكستان وكندا فى طريقة الحياه والتقاليد ... وهذا يجعل الأمور صعبة لم يستطيع الفرد أن يفهم شيئاً ... وكنا نتسائل إلى أين جئنا ؟...

الـ تواصل : ما هى عوائـ ق الـ تواصل الـ قائـ مة ما بـ ين الأ سر حديـ ثة الـهجرة ومدارس أبـ نائـ هم ؟
يـ قول أحد الآبـ اء الـم تحدثـ ين بـ الـم ندريـ ن :" لـ م يـ كن بـ الـمدر سة إجـ تماعات عـ نا الـ لـ يلة لـم ساعدة الأ سر حديـ ثة الـهجرة إلـ ى كـ ندا عـ لى الـ تواصل تـ نظم إجـ تما مع الـمدر سة ومـ ناقـ شة كـ يـ فـ ية تـ عـ لم أولادهم وتـ أقـ لمهم مع الـ بـ يـ ئة الـ كـ ندية ، هذا كـ يف نـ سـ تطـ يع مـ ساعدة الآبـ اء عـ لى الـ تعود عـ لى –مجـ تمع مـ تعدد الـ ثـ قافـ ات الـ حـ ياه هنا ؟ ... لا أعـ تـ قد أن هناك أى إجـ تماعات بـ خـ صوص هـ ا الـمو ضوع بـ الـمدر سة" .
بـ ناء الـ علاقـ ات : كـ يف يـ سـ تطـ يع الـمعـ لم ين واولـ ياء الأمور تـ كوين عـ لاقـ ات بـ ناءة ومـ تكافـ ئة بـ ينهم ؟
يقول مدرس الطلاب الصوماليين :" أعتقد أن سياسة الباب المفتوح مهمة ايضاً ، لأنه لو غـ لـ قت الإدارة أبـ وابـ ها سبوعاً فـ ى كـ ل وقـ ت واضطرت لـ تـ نسـ يق موعد لـ لحضور وقـ د يـ سـ تغرق ا أوما شابـ ه ... فـ هذا غـ يرمجدى، لـ و يـ أتـ ى ولـ ى الأمر كـ لما كـ انـ ت هناك مـ شكـ لة فـ يـ سـ تطـ يع أن يـ صـ لح الأمر مـ باشرة .
. ولقد رأيت آباء يأتون فقط ليلقون السلام ، وانا أعتقد أن هذا مهم جداً

وكـ يف يـ خـ تـ لف هذا –دور الـمدرس : ما هو دور الـمدرس فـ ى الـ بـ يـ ئة الـ كـ ندية تـ الأ سر الـمهاجرة ؟ الـ دور عن تـ وقـ عا
يقول أحد اولياء الأمور المتحدثين بالصومالية :" يختلف دور المعلم هنا عن دوره فى الصومال ، واعتقد ان المدرس فى الصومال إعتاد ان يأخذ دور المربي فقط .. وهذا ليس ما كنا نتوقعه من مدرسى بلادنا ... فالحالة صعبة جداً ،والتعود عليها أيضاً صعب .

معـ لومات لأولـ ياء الأمور والـ قائـ مين عـ لى رعايـ تهم :
ما هى الـمعـ لومات الـ تى يـ حـ تاجها أولـ ياء الأمور والـموظـ فون الـ قائـ مون عـ لى رعايـ تهم فـ يما يـ خص الـمدر سـ ين والـ نظام الـ تعـ ليمى فـ ى كـ ندا لـ يـ تمكـ نوا من إتـ خاذ الـ قرارات الـ صحـ يحة بـ شأن تـ عـ ليم أولادهم ؟
ن بالروسية : " فقط حينما جربنا نظامين مختلفين فى يـ قول ولـ ى أمر من الـم تحدثـ ي التعليم المدرسى إعتقدنا أننا سنجد نفس الشيء هنا ، بأمانة... لم نكن نتخيل أن النظام سيكون "فالإختلاف كبير وقد لاحظنا ذلك متاخراً بعد ان إرتكبنا بعض الأخطاء – مختلفاً جداً .

ن م تاح ين ب دون م قاب ل ع لى موق ع وال ك ت يب س يكون ا DVDم ة تط فات ال
ال ش بكة ال دول ى الآت ى :

http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca

وال ك ت يب عن طري ق الإت صال DVD وتستطيع أيضاً الحصول على نسخة من ال
Antoinette Gagneب ال دك تورة الا س تاذ ال م شارك ب جامعة ت ورن تو
agagne@oise.utoronto.ca معهد ت ورن تول لدرا سات ف ى ال ترب ية

ت بادل خ براتـ ك ف ى إطار ال تعاون ب ين الأ سرة وال مدر سة : ن حن ن ود ان ن سمع
ح كاي اتـ كم وخ براتـ كم ف ى مجال ال تعاون ب ين الا سرة وال مدر سة ، ول معرف ة
ل مزي د عن ذل ك ن دعوكم ل لم شاركة ب ك تاب ة مذكرات ق صـ يرة عن خ براتـ كم ف ى ا
هذا ال مجال ال تعاون ى ذل ك وان معرف ة ما ي حدث ل دى ال مدارس والأ سر الاخرى
ي ساعد ال معل مين والأ سر ف ى ب ناء علاق ات أف ضل مع ب عضهم ال بعض .
ي رجى إر سال م شاركاتـ كم ع لى ال بري د ال تال ى :

Antoinette Gagné
Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
OISE/UT
252 Bloor Street West Toronto
Ontario
M5S 1V6
agagne @oise.utoronto.ca
Or post them on the ESL Insfusion Website at

http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/stories.asp

Appendix H: The Growing New Roots DVD Series