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Family Intervention Strategies:

Support for Struggling Readers

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FAMILY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Abstract

This study examined the success of family intervention strategies to support literacy development among children who are struggling readers through daily activities and routines. Research followed a family participating in a shared family literacy intervention model, targeted participant/student being a ten year old male over four tutoring sessions. Data was collected through parent/student questionnaire, field notes/reflection, focus group and parent interview. By engaging the student as a learner through shared family experiences, daily routines and activities were used as literacy learning opportunities to increase student performance and the family was able to extend literacy strategies into daily routines. With family support, experiences can be taught and facilitated through a child’s daily experiences and natural environment. In order to promote ongoing literacy development, parents and teachers must support the home and school environments through extension of literacy strategies throughout the child’s daily activities and routines.
Family Intervention Strategies: Supports for Struggling Reader

Children are able to reach pre academic literacy goals prior to the entrance of kindergarten when provided early, positive, and ongoing family support (Baker, 2003). Family support is defined by using daily routines and activities to take and make meaning from the environments to build developmental and literacy skills across socioeconomic status (Health, 1982). Mainstream and nonmainstream children benefit from familial support, education, and modeling through federal/state funded programs as participation changes from teachers to parents to address the developmental, socio-cultural, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions of early literacy skills (Health, 1982, Kucer, 2009). Federal and State funded programs such as Early Intervention, Parents as Teachers, Head Start, and Action for a Better Community provide family support services to assist parents as the child’s first and most important teacher (Masbach, 1993). Program offerings include: parent training, familial support, school readiness for preschool age children, and therapeutic support for children with developmental delays so that all children may enter Kindergarten as successful learners with positive family support. These programs support children and families from birth to three years of age or birth to five years of age depending on the program and familial/child need. When the child reaches age and/or developmental specific goals home and familial supports end. This is due to funding mechanisms that are contingent upon developmental milestones, eligibility focus, and age level requirements. Early Intervention and Parents as Teachers are contingent on the child’s age (supporting children from 0-3 years of age) and developmental/familial need. If developmental and age appropriate goals are met, then the family and child are no longer eligible to receive services. Head Start and Action for a Better Community programs are contingent upon the child’s age (0-5 years of age) and familial goals. Head Start and Action for a Better Community end with the child’s successful
entrance to Kindergarten. Continuation of child and familial support through related community services are dependent upon the service provider (agency) and families’ ability to access outside community supports prior to the ending of their current program. With Early Intervention, the program will end at the child’s third birthday. If a child requires services past the third birthday, the program will assist the family with transition to the local school district to the Committee for Preschool Special Education (CPSE) services for the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Eligibility for support services then moves from an individual family based support plan known as an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) to an academic focus as listed in the child’s Individualized Education Plan. With the start of the child’s IEP, family support systems end. Often, families are left without needed skills to communicate successfully with their school district, address and support new developmental goals, and advocate effectively for their child or family.

In recent years, there have been large measures to illicit familial and community networks like Head Start, Early Intervention and Parents as Teachers to address ongoing family support of primary and school age children. There is a stated need for ongoing familial support to reach academic and literacy skills past the entrance of kindergarten and throughout the student’s academic career. These needs are expressed through national failing literacy rates among school age children, student retention, graduation rates, and job readiness. With federal funding contingent upon school performance, there is a direct benefit for school districts to implement ongoing family intervention supports despite budget cuts within resource education.

Several school districts have provided innovative means to address family intervention supports in relation to literacy throughout the nation through family and community networks. These measures include programs such as: reading as partners, family workshops, and family
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activities with a literacy focus. The programs differ in location and layout. All programs use modeling and intervention strategies so that the parent is empowered to use daily routines and activities to build literacy skills. These programs focus on building a positive parent/child and community relationship just as Early Intervention, Parents as Teachers and Head Start.

Literacy programs directed towards children within the primary through high school years have struggled with success rates due to student, parent and community engagement. Student growth is difficult to assess due to the qualitative nature of the program. Parents struggle with their role at home and involvement as a parent in the school/classroom community. Depending upon the layout of the program, family involvement, parent schedule, and flexibility of the provider, the program may or may not fit the needs of the student and parent.

Successful programs are known for their retention and involvement of parents and families. Parental support programs have been formed and funded by local community governments to address family literacy interventions. In exchange, the programs are run by the parents and families. The success of one such group funded through the state of Connecticut has grown into a national program known as PLTI (Parent Leadership Training Institute). PLTI provides education and training for parents to become advocates and agents of change, not only for their children but for their community. Graduates of the Parent Leadership Training Institute go on to reach out to families and parents to further the growth and change of PLTI.

As research indicates (Heath, 1982), various aspects of literacy skills are engaged in to be successful in the community and home environments. Ongoing supports and interventions are needed to address literacy skills in a holistic manner rather than segmenting skills throughout the community and home environments. The goal of early foundational programs is to strengthen and support the family/parent/child relationship using daily routines and dynamics of the family.
With the use of these opportunities, parents are supported as the child’s first and most important teacher. Teachers and therapists provide supports based on developmental and age appropriate goals to address the child’s needs as a learner using family activities and daily routines. As the child reaches three to five years of age, pre literacy skills and following adult directed activities are focused on to address school readiness. The entrance to school changes the dynamics and needs of the family. The family must address communication with the school and advocate for the child’s needs. However, the family must be able to initiate and maintain a direct connection or conversation with the teacher and their child to support learning at home and extend learning opportunities. The family must be able to manipulate their schedule to address home learning by providing space, resources, and knowledgeable support. Therefore there is a stated need for a comprehensive family literacy program throughout the child’s school career.

This action research project seeks to explore how home family literacy interventions support struggling readers. Within this action research project, I acted as a participant and active observer while facilitating a shared family literacy intervention model with the targeted participant/student, Bob Lakes and family members (Mother, two siblings). A total of four sessions were held targeting literacy and math skill goals of the participant while differentiating instruction for the participant’s siblings. All activities and strategies modeled were designed to be implemented across the family’s daily activities and routines. The mother, Samantha Lakes exchanged roles with me throughout the sessions acting as an observer, supporting and differentiating instruction for siblings and implementing strategies throughout the family’s daily routines.

The original goal of the study was to provide four one hour sessions targeting the participant’s literacy and math skills. By working one on one with the student for 30 minutes,
modeling for the parent for 15 minutes strategies, and for the last 15 minutes implement with the parent and student known strategies using daily activities and routines. Due to parent and student request, tutoring sessions were redirected to involve the whole family. Through review of the Garfield Reading and Writing inventories the student prefers a collaborative shared model of learning and participation rather than independent isolated activities. The student expressed concern, anger, and lack of motivation towards learning when placed in a setting that did not allow for shared creative learning. Parent interview and questionnaire at the beginning of the tutoring process substantiated concerns towards Bob’s (targeted participant) self-esteem, lack of interest or struggle to complete work in school and home settings when isolated. As tutoring sessions took on a more shared family experience the performance of the student improved, while the ability of the family to carry over literacy strategies into daily routines increased. After completing the tutoring sessions, the student reported that he felt that the tutoring process supported not only his growth as a student but the growth of his siblings as well. At the beginning of the tutoring process, Samantha Lakes (mother), did not use daily activities or routines as learning opportunities as listed in the parent questionnaire. After four sessions, Samantha was able to list two daily activities and routines that she was able to use as learning opportunities.

The implications of this study were threefold: attention to student needs, incorporation of shared literacy family experiences, and implementation of literacy strategies throughout daily activities and routines. Through observation and interview, Bob Lakes’ needs as a learner were able to be expressed. When placed in a shared cooperative learning environment rather than a typical isolated independent review of reading and writing strategies, Bob excelled. The creative collaborative learning process is key to Bob’s success in academia as well as in life. However,
strong preferences of a shared collaborative learning process rather than independent learning can negatively impact the student in learning and home communities. Due to the nature of academia and life in general, the student may not always be able to share control and direction of the creative process of the work which can cause conflicts with authority as well as group members. Also, the expectation of guidelines and self-study may be difficult to meet. The growth of the family through the shared experience of literacy strategies was noticeable in the engagement of the family throughout daily routines and activities expressed in student work and in sibling review. Using the recorded focus group of the targeted participant and siblings at the end of the tutoring sessions, the targeted participant (Bob Lakes) and siblings (Jenna and Matthew) were able to list items that they had learned. The shared experience was a positive for the mother, Samantha Lakes, as she was able to locate activities throughout the day where she could engage, interact, and address each child’s needs. However, this left little time to target specific areas of need or skills individually with the children. As an educator in the field of literacy, it is important to understand the personality and preferences of the student as a learner and student/family dynamics to best support the student across home/school environments. Through ongoing communication and parent involvement, literacy strategies modeled and implemented in the classroom can be successfully carried over to the students’ home life.

**Theoretical Framework**

Literacy is the reflection of cultural communicative practices of society. As ideas are communicated and shared among groups of peoples, these exchanges take on new forms and meanings. Literacy moves from practices of a global society to various subsets of societal groups identified by culture, community, race, gender, religion, and sexual identification/practice (Gee, 2001, Larson and Marsh, 2005). This information exchange is ever changing and malleable. As
the communicative practices of society change through the exchange of power, contexts of socio-cultural meanings and the development of technology so does literacy and the practice(s) of literacy (Baron, 2001, Larson and Marsh, 2005). These communicative practices are malleable and unique to the group known as “discourses.” A social individual’s membership to the group may be identified as a discourse (Gee, 2001). Discourses can be unique to the family unit as well as the classroom environment. For some children a common discourse can be found across home and school environments.

The changing or malleable context of literacy moves from oral language (sharing of ideas) to forms of literacy through multimodal texts to share and exchange information. Information technology and social platforms are more current sources of multimodal literacy contexts. By studying the varying practices and perspectives of communities or social groups, the knowledge of how people acquire language and literacy can be gained (Health, 1982). Parents facilitate children’s development of oral language and literacy using daily routines and activities to take and make meaning from their environments. These daily learning opportunities build developmental and literacy skills and are practiced across socioeconomic status from birth (Health, 1982, Kucer, 2009). These practices are often done unconsciously by the parent and child in the exchange of conversation, access to technologies, and routine activities within the community throughout the day. Through study of the family, information can be gained as to how oral language and literacy is acquired and facilitated (Health, 1982). By review and exposure of these opportunities throughout the day, families may use these opportunities purposely to address areas of need and extensions of literacy.

Based on the engagement and changing participation in the environment, the child’s development and literacy skills are defined as reviewed by Health’s study of varying
communities across socio-economic guidelines (Health, 1982). A large resource of the child’s language and literacy acquisition are extended family members, siblings, and/or caregivers beyond the direct contact of the parents. Discourses can be unique to the family unit as well as the classroom environment. For some children a common discourse can be found across home and school environments. Gee (2002) looks at the way in which oral language is used and early literacies are compiled through the primary discourse at home. Thus comparing the primary discourse at home to that of the academic discourse of the classroom to substantiate language acquisition, known as the theory of sociolinguistics. Gee (2002) states that knowledge is being taken in through the process of language acquisition if the primary home and school discourse match. Gee defines language acquisition by “practicing developing skills…acquiring something subconsciously through exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without formal teaching.”

On a linguistic level, children can increase communicative competence by increasing receptive and expressive language acuity. Children acquire receptive language by taking and making meaning from adult directives. Children are able to make their wants and needs known through the use of expressive language. As communicative competencies increase, children are able to manipulate aspects of language through increased phrase length. There are five aspects of language. The five aspects of language are: sound(s) relation to words to meaning (phonic), organization, building and extending on prior learning’s (semantic), combination of words to create or reflect a purposed intent or function (syntactic), manipulations of word structures to assist in novel/spontaneous language (morphemic), and use of an overall understanding of the intent of communication and how to achieve it in the appropriate social setting ( pragmatic). As the child grows older, the child will generalize and practice these structures through daily
interactions with members of their community, peers, storybooks/television shows, and with early introductions in academic settings known as sociolinguistics (Kucer, 2009). The child’s acquisition of such language structures remains heavily contextualized based on the dominant discourse within their home, access to such settings, and community environment.

To better understand how children acquire ways of using language specifically through oral and written uses and the role that each play in literacy acquisition and learning, Health (1982) immersed herself in a field study of the early stages of a child’s development from birth to school age of three differing communities. The three communities studied are: Maintown (white, middleclass background), Roadville (white, working class background), and Trackton (African American, working class background) (Heath, 1982). Heath’s research has been used to inform, focus, and further define the process of literacy acquisition and learning throughout the past three decades. Heath’s findings further substantiate the sociolinguistic and sociocultural learning theories that oral language impacts literacy acquisition by the process of extending a rule governed system: “reflecting society’s values and attitudes towards literacy” (Goodman, 2001), “relation to concepts that are expressed orally” (Goodman, 2001) or awareness of sound/symbol correspondence (Otto, 2008), and manipulations of sounds to make meaning or change meaning (Kucer, 2009). However, how the child “acquires” oral language varies depending on the dominant discourse of their family, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds (Heath, 1982). A child growing up in Maintown has a high emphasis on imitating language, labeling familiar items, answering “wh” questions, and imaginary play to locate deeper meanings among items (Heath, 1982).

The exploration of how information is gained, how it is interpreted, how it is applied, and what type of means are used to extend or portray an idea are all examples of multiple ways that
literacy has been employed across peoples and settings moving from socio-linguistic theory to
the socio-cultural learning theory (Goodman, 2001). The sociocultural theory is applied in the
classroom by “changing participation” so that all members of the classroom are able to share, use
meaningfully, and analyze the everyday practices of their particular group with others across all
settings. Further demonstrating that not all children share the same discourse or learning
background. The traditional teacher/student classroom and student-centered classrooms fluctuate
as participation changes (Larson & Marsh, 2005) When constructing at home family intervention
supports, participation is changed from a classroom/community model to a family/community
model to illicit developmental, sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions of early
literacy skills from daily routines and activities (Heath, 1982, Kucer, 2009).

Research Question

Given that literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction, this
action research project asks, how can family interventions strategies support literacy
development among children who are struggling readers?

Literature Review

This literature review will explore the literacy practices of families with students across
socioeconomic groups in early childhood or primary school years at risk for school failure by
reviewing the level of family engagement within the home and community through social
literacy practices and levels of support provided to the family to illicit or extend learning
opportunities. This literature review seeks to highlight the growing political and social
commentary regarding the relationship between the achievement gap and literacy acquisition.

Since the defining works of Clay (1980), Health (1983), and Teale (1986), attention has
been given to early childhood or primary school age children to foster academic success through
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Defining literacy development and literacy practices of the student, family, and community. Clay (1980) attends to the early literacy development of preschool age and primary age children by placing importance on children’s beginning awareness of print and sound as a precursor to literacy success. Heath (1983) and Teale (1986) explore the child’s out-of-school literacy practices or engagement with print and sound in relation to their community and family practices to address the foundations of early literacy success.

Across socioeconomic and cultural descriptions, family and community literacy practices are rich in value. These practices range from storytelling to a recording of daily activities on a family trip in a journal as a way to communicate through oral and printed literacies. The value of the literacy experiences is measured based on the exchange and extension of the experience or the event. Analysis of value across socioeconomic and cultural classifications of literacy practices that focus on reading materials, literacy experiences, and conversations among the family associated with literacy experiences, and extensions of experiences at home and school environments are found equally (McCarthey, 1997, Korat, Klein, & Segal-Drori, 2007).

However, the literacy skills of children entering kindergarten and in the primary years speak otherwise (Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truitt & Munsterman, 1997). Literacy value of all experiences seems to be disputed when looking at the disproportionate amount of children of low socioeconomic status versus children of higher socioeconomic backgrounds when reviewing literacy skills upon entrance to kindergarten. A large percentage of children identified as low or lacking in pre academic and literacy skills needed to participate in a classroom setting are most commonly associated as part of a low socioeconomic group. The larger percentages of students with standard or above standard skills are reflective of a higher socioeconomic group and marked for continued success.
This literature review seeks to explore the disparity of success of children across socioeconomic strata’s through comparison of level of family engagement. Preschool students marked at risk for failure are typically defined by social biases or assumptions based on socioeconomic groupings rather than reviewing the student’s rich home literacies and familial involvement. When familial strengths are recognized and addressed through literacy strategies, the family is able to take on and extend such practices for the support of the student and family in the home and community. After reviewing literature addressing family literacy intervention strategies the following themes emerged which will further be discussed: preschool students marked at risk for failure, family intervention programs and strategies, and extension of family and community supports.

**Preschool Students Marked At Risk for Failure**

Since the research of Clay (1980) placing importance on children’s beginning awareness of print and sound, a large amount of research has been conducted supporting the success of readers with early literacy instruction among preschool or primary school children in comparison to children without instruction (Badian, 1998; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Further research has substantiated that early literacy instruction marks for ongoing and continued success. Research as indicated by Mansbach (1993) states:

Early success with reading and prior interactive reading experiences provide the child with a foundation for more abstract language patterns, advanced conceptual development, and evaluative thinking skills which are required to progress through the elementary grades. The child is less likely to repeat one of the first three grades, known correlate to becoming a high school dropout. (p. 3).
Children that have been exposed to pre literacy skills in a positive environment prior to attending school have more success than children that have not been exposed. Children that have not been exposed to pre literacy skills are more likely to demonstrate failure in the early grade levels and continue to have a negative following throughout their school career. Following the sociolinguistic theory of Gee (2002), children whose primary discourse (communication, exchange, sharing of ideas) matches that of the school language or discourse are acquiring skills rather than learning skills. Through definition of acquisition, information shared in the learning environment is not new information, but practiced and applied in various forms. Children whose primary discourse does not meet that of the school language or discourse are not only taking on a secondary discourse but are learning new information rather than acquiring information. These children must work harder and faster as they are learning information rather than acquiring information. Thus resulting in lower reported levels of school success and opportunities to correspond home/family literacies with school literacies. Nonmainstream children or children of lower socioeconomic groups are typically children whose primary discourse does not meet that of the school language or primary discourse of mainstream children (Gee, 2002). By providing children with opportunities to practice and engage in school discourse or language prior to entering school through home family interventions supports student success.

As educators and researchers, it is important to note that the school language or discourse can be changed based on the exchange of power. Therefore, no one discourse is higher or richer in intellect than another. Heath (1983) and Teale (1986) review through ethnographic study and communal research that the family and community provide rich literacy practices and training despite resources/socio-economic groupings that early literacy instruction requires to be successful. All experiences can be taught and facilitated through children and family’s daily
experiences and natural environment. It is up to the parent, care giver, or educator to locate the richness of the activity and engage the child. Torgsen (2000) further emphasizes that family members throughout the course of the child’s relationship, care, daily routines and interactions are the best support in the development of the child’s literacy skills and success as a reader in the classroom. Substantiating that family support extends beyond the parents but would include family members that the child has daily interactions with such as: grandparent, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even siblings. Bruns and Peirce (2012) note that families have many natural contexts in which to create opportunities for practicing skills related to (a) early phonemic awareness tasks, (b) learning new and complex vocabulary, and (c) heightening motivation to read. Some of these natural contexts may include identifying and sounding out the letters to a store name, learning new vocabulary words when listening to a conversation that a family member may have over the phone or at a community location, and exposure to a sibling reading for homework a book or member of the family gaining new information from reading a sign out loud. Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) describe the natural setting and achievement of these goals when parents talk to their child/children, have conversations with them, tell stories with them, and read books to them.

These activities do not happen naturally in many families due to schedules, access to resources, education, and development of familial relationships. These situations may not account for a familial member’s disability, mental illness, or deficit in the areas of development: social/emotional, cognition, adaptive, motor, and communication. These experiences can be found across all socioeconomic cross sections, however may most typically be identified in low-income families (Korat, Klein, & Segal-Drori, 2007; Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, & Ortiz, 2010) due to limited education, language skills, and literacy skills present in lower
socioeconomic strata’s (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, & Ortiz, 2010). Drawing from Teale (1986), the Anglo, Black and Mexican American families studied used literacy practices as social and community components within their home and provided purpose for entertainment, religious, and school related activities on a daily basis. Despite the assumption that children and families of low socioeconomic status cannot provide literacy experiences, McCarthey (1997) states, “Many examples of “highly literate homes” among low income families were documented” (p. 180).

Failure to acquire these skills from repeated socioeconomic groups has long created and substantiated a myth within education that families of lower socio economic groups do not value or understand literacy. McLaren (1988) warned that this assumption would lead to educational practices that reduce knowledge to transmitting, memorizing, and repeating information, thus failing to provide students with information that is relevant to their lives. McCarthey challenges the unspoken myth that working families do not value literacy or understand classroom activities in response to learning. McCarthey states:

One of the major barriers for students of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds has been the assumption by many educators that working-class homes provide limited language-learning environments, have faulty patterns of socialization and place little value on education. (p. 181).

These myths or “social underpinnings” regarding assumptions of socioeconomic strata’s and outcomes (Gregory & Williams, 2004) have influenced research, how to properly identify a child at risk, provide home interventions and strategies to support early literacy education. When drawing on the success of a child, one must be careful to review the strengths and needs of the child and family to address support rather than the child’s economic or social grouping. When
information is reviewed based on assumptions or unconscious biases, information is misallocated and missed opportunities are created to accurately define, identify, and build successful intervention programs for children in need of literacy skills. As noted by Justice and Pence (2004) “Many conceptual and theoretical unknowns remain about how children develop language and literacy and how best to design early language and literacy interventions for those children who are vulnerable for disability in these areas” (p. 174). Due to the assumptions regarding abilities and success rate for students within the lower social and economic groupings, many understanding and theories are inaccurately represented influencing the design and implementation of a comprehensive intervention program and family support strategies.

Vulnerability for disability in the area of literacy is subject for review based on definition. Depending upon the age of the learner and purpose of study, the definition of a struggling reader or child at risk may change. Drawing from the U. S. Department of Education, Striving Readers Program, a struggling reader is defined as a student that has for two years read below grade level (Rel Central, 2008). A struggling reader may be defined as a learner that despite exertation does not meet age/developmental expected milestones pertaining to literacy goals over a period of time. Due the focus of the research targeting early intervention skills, at an early childhood and primary school age level many of the children do not possess the length of time or experience to be reflected as a struggling reader. Children in the primary grades are often recommended by their teachers early on to receive additional support as noted by Feiler and Logan (2007) to be “at risk of under achieving in literacy” (p.132). These children are recommended to receive intervention services based on the challenges that they face to take on literacy skills such as a developmental delay, diagnosis, and/or the families’ ability to locate and access resources (Masbach, 1993). This definition could further reinforce social underpinning or
assumptions. Justice and Pence (2004) offer a more comprehensive definition for children that may be at risk of failure by defining:

Vulnerable children as those who must overcome diverse challenges to become successful communicators and conventionally literate. Challenges to development may include environmental hazards, such as: poverty and abuse, as well as developmental circumstances, such as hearing impairment, language impairment, and mental retardation. (p. 174)

Although Justice and Pence (2004) provide a more detailed definition of what has been termed as a child “at risk,” a “vulnerable writer,” or a “struggling reader” further confusions can arise in the nature of education and the purpose or entrance of intervention. The Justice and Pence (2004) term presents a preventive approach to education and reading success whereas in academia intervention strategies are a more reactive measure based on current need of support and developmental delay than prevention measure.

The question remains why children of lower socioeconomic groups score lower than children of higher socioeconomic groups in early elementary school when measuring literacy skills despite acknowledgement of assumptions of social underpinnings and systematic differences (Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, & Munstermann, 1997). Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, and Munstermann substantiate that the cause of such differences in academic progress can be reflected in nature of home experiences or culture of children and congruence or lack of congruence to school based expectations. This reflection of lack of congruent expectations follows Gee’s (2001) definition of primary and secondary discourses in relationship to student literacy and school success rate. The child’s home language, culture, and environment make up their primary discourse. The child’s secondary language is
reflective a culture that has been learned based on interactions or engagement outside of their sociocultural context. When a child’s home language is congruent with that of the information shared as designated by school based expectations the child is more likely to succeed and at a rate faster than a child who is taking on new information in the classroom and navigating a secondary discourse. These findings are further substantiated by Hinden and Paratore’s (2007) study reviewing the effectiveness of Home-School partnerships for the support of young children’s literacy learning through a home Repeated-Reading intervention:

Children who are economically poor and culturally or linguistically diverse may not experience the types of literacy interactions that correlate with school-based reading success. (p. 312).

Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truit, and Munstermann (1997) further review find that the home and cultural background are facilitated and influenced by parent’s beliefs and actions. By understanding more about parent’s beliefs, cultural background, and histories, more understanding would be provided as to the parent’s beliefs about how their children learn and develop. These understandings could be as simple as a parent, parents, and/or family have had a difficult time with communication or literacy skills as a student and/or a negative experience in school. According to research compiled by Masbach in 1993:

23 million adults are considered to be functionally illiterate which is defined as reading at or below a fifth grade level. While this presents a lack of ability to respond to the changing requirements of the workplace, the lack of literacy skills inhibits the ability of the adult to facilitate or develop emergent literacy skills in their children. (p. 3)

The difference could be in the delivery of instruction and expectation of what to do with the instruction. Schools who service a working class community is generally mildly authoritarian
and regimented (Saracho, 1997). Health (1982) found that the social economic make-up of the community influenced the value placed on specific literacy skills and community interaction which was present in children. The working class community of Health’s ethnographic study found that the children had a strong ability of children to label, repeat, and respond to “wh” questions appropriately. Health appropriated this to the knowledge needed to be successful in the work environment and emphasis placed on knowledge learned from religious contexts. When asked to synthesis the information or apply to another context, the children could not. When studying an impoverished socio economic group reflecting a dominant cultural group, the children were able to synthesis and apply information to other contexts but could not accurately label or respond to “wh” questions. The lack of ability to accurately label items was found to be due to the cultural or home emphasis on not what an item is but what the item can do or become. The scarcity of resources or lack of multiple items, places value on the multiple uses of a product rather than a product itself. Rather than participating in an exchange of “wh” questions and responses, emphasis is placed on communal familial interactions in spoken word and engagement of the persons in the exchange. Health’s further study of a higher socio-economic group of children could meet all tasks based on exposure and extensions of various perspectives and cultures through books and family experiences/ties.

Cultural or social beliefs of the parent may further impact the success rate of the child. In the study, Parental Beliefs about Ways to Help Children Learn to Read: The Impact of an Entertainment or Skills Perspective, by Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, and Munstermann (1997) found that parents of lower socioeconomic (LSE) groups believed that literacy was a skill that needed to be “deliberately cultivated” (pg. 114). Parents were found to value a skill based approach to learning literacy through flash cards and workbooks rather than
through entertainment or play. Families of higher socioeconomic (HES) group defined literacy as something the child experienced naturally throughout their daily life/routines and believed that a more entertainment style approach such as parent/child reading and playing with print were more effective than a skill based approach. These responses were obtained from an interview with each family asking two questions: “What is the most effective way to help your child learn to read?” and “What do you believe is the most important reason for learning to read? Other reasons?” (p. 5).

It is important to note that values were shared across LSE and HSE parents when asked what the goals they had for their child (including one academic goal) stated that their child would stay in school and be a good reader. It is then further substantiated that this goal would be ensured by the shared responsibility of the school and parent. The intervention approach of Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills (SHELLS) in a Migrant Head Start (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, & Ortiz, 2010) used the “literacy strengths of the family, storytelling, to address the many risk factors of a family of lower socioeconomic status and fewer supportive behaviors” (p. 344). By using the shared common goals of the school and families that the student would be a good reader and graduate from high school involved in Migrant Head Start, SHELLS or Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills, the engagement and strengths of the family were addressed. The family and school recognize that there are many risks associated with the desire that would impact the student to reach the goals of being a good reader and successfully finishing school. These risks are: language barriers, language acquisition, literacy acquisition and sustained academic and community engagement. By examining and using the strengths of the cultural social discourse and/or literacy practices of the family such as storytelling to address language barriers and
promote the child’s primary discourse for oral/literacy acquisition, facilitators are able to empower the parent as the child’s first and most important teacher. The act of storytelling can be extended to creating family books as well as extending to other family members for resources and engagement. Links to the community of Migrant workers can be created through the collaboration and extensions of shared stories.

**Family Intervention Programs and Strategies**

Family engagement with intervention programs and strategies has been provided to reduce the number of at risk or vulnerable readers upon entering the primary school age years (Saracho, 1997). By supporting the family unit, the child is provided with another system of support to facilitate ongoing development and strengthening family-school congruence. By focusing on the family unit as the recipient of literacy and other training emphases, family literacy reaches out to the adult caregiver who will be or currently is nurturing children (Mansbach, 1993). The parent or family unit is recognized as the child’s first and ongoing teacher and provided with the tools and model to support the child. The National Literacy Trust (2005) reports that “home visiting can be a very effective mechanism for offering support to parents in the familiar surroundings of their home as it can encompass modeling ways of communicating with children” (p. 2). Often, family members are providing the support and instruction needed for development but need to be encouraged in the process or provided with new alternate strategies to address the child’s growing interests and engagement in higher level skills. Intervention approaches have been justified to address the need to provide parents with strategies to foster literacy in their children (Saracho, 1997). According to Gregory and Williams (2004), “It is increasingly accepted by educators that the home provides an important underpinning for later learning and that literacy practices school” (p. 162).
In order for the intervention to be successful children and family members must participate. Successful interventions (Saracho, 1997) are multifaceted, focus on directly engaging the child by facilitating quality parent-child interactions and quality of the home environment to illicit specific goals. The shared participation of children and family members provides the sharing of the literacy event and provision of skill based instruction with extensions of learning. A well rounded family literacy program according to Mansbach (1993) must include three items such as:

- Developing and reinforcing children’s literacy level through age appropriate curriculum.
- Enhancing parent literacy and parenting skills based on the intensity of familial need.
- Promotion of literacy through modeling and guided parent-child interaction with observation and feedback to address emerging literacy development. (p. 2)

When programs address the above components they are able to accurately address the needs of the student at risk through developmentally appropriate intervention strategies and provide direction and feedback for parents to implement these strategies throughout the child’s daily routines across all settings. These components allow for ongoing instruction long past the implementation and end of interventions.

Mansbach (1997) continues to describe programs with intervention strategies that are less holistic in literacy approaches through the following:

- Other programs that are less comprehensive may focus specifically on a child/student or an adult interaction to increase positive parent interaction or a specific literacy strategy.
- Programs may be described or classified based on the interaction that they target or
purpose towards such as: Direct Adults-Direct Children, Indirect Adult-Indirect Children,
Direct Adults-Indirect Children, and Indirect Adults-Direct Children. (p. 2)

A variety of family based home intervention programs and strategies can be found on a
local, national and international level. Specific to literacy interventions local programs include:
Head Start and Parents as Teachers. National programs include: Families for Literacy, Preschool
to 8 years old, (Sacramento, California), Keenan Trust Family Literacy, ages 3-4 years old
(Louisville, KY), and Beginning with Books, ages infants to preschool (Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania). On an international level (LEAP) The Literacy Early Action Project, a home
visiting literacy intervention in Britain for children and families during their reception
(kindergarten) year (Masbach, 1993). Depending on the focus of the program implementation
may reflect direct or indirect adult-child interactions at home, school, or within the community.

Further studies reflect that although the intervention program may be widely used it
cannot be successful if the parent is not engaged and supported. It is important to reflect on the
parent’s strengths rather than deficits. Engagement of the child and family is to be more focused
on facilitating and eliciting interactions that would address literacy practices and goals (Saracho,
1997). Successful family intervention programs across all modalities to build engagement
(Masbach, 1993) are built upon: “Elevating the parent as the child’s first and most important
teacher, parent collaborative learning, child’s engagement and participation, and parent-friendly
locations” (p. 3). Typically such interventions are found within the home as the home
environment supports parent interaction and child engagement.

Home family intervention and programs have come under fire recently due to the high
expense rate. As well as the program’s lack of ability to substantiate measureable growth through
means other than observation, anecdotal notes, and parent report due to its quantitative nature rather than its qualitative nature. There is substantial material refuting The National Literacy Trust (2005) reports that “home visiting can be a very effective mechanism for offering support to parents in the familiar surroundings of their home as it can encompass modeling ways of communicating with children” (p. 3). When predicting and reporting the possible implications of LEAP in England, Gomboy (2004) compared the success rate of the home literacy intervention model with that of the success rate of American based models. Gomboy stated that upon review all American home visiting programs struggled with enrollment, engagement, and retention of families in home intervention programs. Gomboy concluded that families are either not willing or not able to take as much of the services as is intended by program designers therefore not meeting expected developmental goals and lacking in fiscal responsibility.

Saracho (1997) finds that lack of enrollment, involvement, and retention of families and goals of the program may be the result in the lack of understanding of the cultural and economic diversity of the family. These understanding according to Saracho (1997) must be reflective across all dimensions of the program involving:

1.) Providing objects and materials that are engaging to the child’s interests and address emerging skills.

2.) Develop strategies that enhance communication and support the extension of the children’s understanding of new information.

(p. 203)

Masbach (1993) furthers the expectations of the program to address retention of children and families as well as outcomes of the intervention strategy with the inclusion of ‘collaborative
partnerships’ between school systems, public libraries, social service agencies, and civic organizations. These relationships with school and community groups allow for location of additional resources, support for the whole family structure, age groups, and extends goals beyond the life of the literacy program. As the family needs define additional sources to support location of resources, stretching food dollars, and mental health services. The approach of the program and collaborative partnerships direct the length and involvement of the session. As well as provide for extension of literacy activities in a participatory manner and security of ongoing support after the literacy interventions are removed.

Successful family home literacy intervention programs such as LEAP are provided on a weekly basis for an hour to an hour and a half by a paraprofessional throughout the school year following school holidays. During such time the paraprofessional engages the child in a book and play with a targeted literacy strategy. Family members (siblings, cousins) are involved in such book reading and play while the teacher and parents or extended family members lead the activity. The teacher or paraprofessional models and problem solves with parents (extended family members) the targeted literacy strategy and illicit responses/engagement to target family set goals to improve the child’s literacy. Discussion with the teacher (paraprofessional) and family members will follow to review strategies and family questions (Feiler and Logan, 2012). Family members are invited to participate in classroom activities and further involvement in community programs to provide extensions from the classroom to the home/community environment.

The study of Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) through Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills (SHELLS) in addition to the Migrant Head Start program created:
A new approach to intervention, using the strengths of families with multiple risk factors was developed to elicit parent-child narrative conversations subsequently documented in family-made books with text and illustrations. This intervention approach was initiated in response to a national need to improve the language and literacy development of low-income children and was designed specifically for parents in a Migrant Head Start program who themselves had limited language and literacy skills. (p. 344)

The purpose of the program was to increase migrant children identified through a Migrant Head Start program as at risk or vulnerable to language and literacy skills at home. A common approach to increasing children’s language and literacy while encouraging the parent based on research is parent-child book reading. Understanding that many parents had difficulty with language and literacy skills, the program was designed to reduce the risk of vulnerability through playing to the child and families’ strengths by using present literacy strategies through active literacy practices such as storytelling. Participation in the SCHELLS program was voluntary and for some families elicited to improve children’s skills and supported families’ work schedules through the Migrant Head Start Program addressing family, home, and community collaboration. The Migrant Head Start program provided day care and academic preschool classes for children of migrant families. The typical day followed the typical work hours of a migrant worker (12 hours) rather than 8 hours with nutritional meals for the children. Some migrant programs follow a Monday through Saturday program rather than a typical work week of Monday through Friday. Families were identified based on language acquisition and/or expressed interest in becoming a better teacher of their child. The program served to address the literacy strengths and culture of the migrant families reflecting a Latino culture of storytelling and primary language being Spanish. A masters level teacher and at times when needed a teacher
that spoke Spanish would come out 4 times within the Migrant season to assist with using storytelling to create a book for the parent and child to read. The limited sessions were built on the understanding of the transitory culture of migrant families due to work availability and hours required in the fields. However, the meetings were expressly designed to be with the mother and selected child to measure goals as cited as the primary caregiver. Facilitators expressed frustration when meetings were often cancelled and not rescheduled or the family opted out of the program. When meetings were conducted very few were positive or able to accomplish needed goals due to the density of the household. Many of the parents and children selected lived in very small quarters with large amounts of family and extended family members. Facilitators reported an increased improvement with children from smaller households in comparison to children reflecting larger households (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz, 2010).

The results of the SCHELLS program indicate that the program was successful due to quantitative data reflecting increased quality of home language and literacy environment. Successful completion of families and qualitative results did not meet the goals of the program. Substantiating the refute of Gomboy, Culross and Berham (1999) regarding the effectiveness of (North American) home visiting programs. The research of Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) did find that there was direct correlation between the density of the home (numbers of persons residing in the home) and the success of the family within the SCHELLS program. When the household was greater in density, the child was less successful. When the household was smaller in numbers, the child was more successful. Demographic data of the SCHELLS program indicates that denser households were made up of extended family: grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The focused relationship was between the mother and the child of the SCHELLS program. It is cause to question if the SCHELLS program had
focused on the strengthening of the engagement of the family and family-child relationship in nurturing of storytelling rather than mother-child would the quality of home language and literacy is as great as or greater than the results of households of less density? When reviewing national and international successful family home literacy interventions such as: LEAP (Feiler and Logan, 2007) and HIPPY (Masbach, 1993) the extension of family was included in home literacy interventions. Thus strengthening the vulnerable child, engagement of the whole family to address the enrichment of literacy interactions, and providing collaboration of community systems for ongoing support and extensions of new learning’s.

The intervention approach of Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills (SHELLS) in a Migrant Head Start (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz, 2010) used the “literacy strengths of the family, storytelling, to address the many risk factors of a family of lower socioeconomic status and fewer supportive behaviors” (p. 344). SHELLS was facilitated through a Migrant Head Start program as an extension of Head Start current services and sought to eliminate the following factors that would hinder involvement and sustained engagement in services through community programming. However SHELLS did not adequately address the cultural extensions of family and involvement of nonfamily members or other caregivers with the child’s literacy development.

In review of the home intervention programs and strategies, LEAP was successful because it not only addressed the collaboration of Masbach (1997) of community and family members but met ongoing needs of the family (extended family members were often present and engaged in the session). As well as the components identified by Saracho (1997):

1.) Providing objects and materials that are engaging to the child’s interests and address emerging skills.
2.) Develop strategies that enhance communication and support the extension of the children’s understanding of new information.

(p. 203)

Although SCHELLS was designed as a culturally comprehension program, it did not address the true needs of the family and/or facilitate further communication with the family. The “Density” of the home was viewed as problematic to reach the goals indentified of the child, address continued communication, and new learning’s. However the density of the home reflected the true nature of the family and community culture of learning and storytelling (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, & Ortiz, 2010).

**Extension of the Family in the Community**

Family literacy interventions not only supports the child’s emerging literacy skills, but supports the parent to become an active participant in their child’s learning, and an advocate for their children in the school setting. Thus changing the way the parent views the educational system and participation of the parent within the classroom and school community (Masbach, 1993). The changing participation of the parent in the classroom and school community is reflected in the participatory exchanges modeled in a literacy event. As the parent exchanges with the child and community in various literacy events and extensions of literacy, this ensures ongoing engagement and development. Baker (2003) finds that the family’s primary task is not to instruct the child but to provide motivational and emotional support where needed. Literacy engagement and instructional strategies are further defined from mere exchanges with two people but the changing roles and communication of a social system. Thus the success of our
students’ occurs when the whole person is supported through the perspectives of the student, family and community environment (Freebody and Luke, 2008).

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory of child outcomes centers around the three relationships of parent-child, parent-teacher, and family-school in relation to micro, meso, exo, and macro systems of the individual (Ruble, Dalrymple, McGrew, 2010). By integrating a student’s background knowledge and experiences; purpose and motivation is provided in the student’s life to drive instruction supports the individual or micro system. By drawing upon the parent’s vast knowledge of their child to assist in the development of lessons and facilitating a strong network of communication the parent-teacher relationship through the ecosystem is support. The location of resources within the community for collaboration and extension of student learning creates a fluidity of literacy instruction substantiated by the socio-cultural learning theory supported by the family-school relationship in the meso and exo systems. Literacy instruction occurs following these systems reaching the vast elements of the macro system (Ruble, Dalrymple, McGrew) and socio-cultural learning theory through exploration of diverse instruction through the lens of Critical Literacy, New Literacy Studies, and New Literacies (Goodman, 2001, Larson and Marsh, 2005, Otto, 2008) to drive student success and create change within the community.

The success rate of any family literacy intervention strategies of struggling readers can be based upon the strengthening of each component: vulnerabilities of the reader(s), engagement of the parents and extended family members, eliciting and extending learning across daily routines, and collaborating with community resources for further learning. When the parent is provided with instructional strategies that address the needs of the reader(s) and correspond with family dynamics and routines, family needs and strengths are addressed. When provided a model for
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such strategies the parent is able to practice and implement strategies within the home. These strategies can be further extended through family planned community activities or differentiated instruction for siblings or extended family members. As the reader grows and participatory changes are needed, the parent and family are able to advocate, access and implement needed resources and strategies to address student and familial needs.

Conclusion

There have been large measures in recent years to extend school, familial, and community networks to address failing literacy rates through home literacy interventions. Influences upon literacy rates and how to best address these influences have been a targeted focus of educational research. It has been found that factors relating to school achievement are related to declines in reading motivation in the elementary school years (Gabriel, Codling, and Palmer, 1996) and beyond into the high school years (Gottfried, Fleming, Gottfried, & Oliver, 2009) leading to a nation of struggling readers. Research has further detailed that family environment and parental support are the third highest ranking factor influencing school achievement. When examining if family made a difference within literacy interventions; Villager, Niggl, Wandeler, & Kutzelm (2012), found that “parental support for reading may therefore be an important point of intervention to address decreasing reading motivation in the upper elementary years” (p. 79). However intervention programs connecting the school and family are few and far between based on school and local community successful implementation. These programs are costly and come with questioned success due to the design and ability to reach the family in an holistic manner. (Villager, Niggl, Wandeler, & Kutzelm, 2012). Although specific goals may not be reached it is further understood that by strengthening the
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relationship between the family and school, an establishment of a coherent, learning environment can occur (Epstein, 2001).

Kagan (1995) has identified four aspects of school readiness: identification of what children know and can do, risks and strengths that make up the child and family, ability to locate and access resources for support, and capacity to develop and extend knowledge gained. Family home interventions and strategies to address children and families at risk for literacy failure are noted to be successful when the family unit is able to support all four aspects of school readiness. Therefore as described by Westheimer (1997) children are able to enter the best and most developmentally appropriate classrooms and/or environments and engage in classroom activities successfully despite factors or limitations of development of necessary social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. This ensures the child’s ability and development of a successful reader and student.

Methods

This action research project sought to explore how home family literacy interventions support struggling readers. Within this action research project, I acted as a participant and active observer while facilitating a shared family literacy intervention model with the targeted participant/student, Bob Lakes and family members (Mother, two siblings). A total of four sessions were held targeting literacy and math skills goals of the participant while differentiating instruction for the participant’s siblings. All activities and strategies modeled were designed to be implemented across the family’s daily activities and routines. The mother, Samantha Lakes exchanged roles with me throughout the sessions acting as an observer, supporting and differentiating instruction for siblings and implementing strategies throughout the family’s daily routines.
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The original goal of the study was to provide four one hour sessions targeting the participant’s literacy and math skills by working one on one with the student for 30 minutes, modeling for the parent for 15 minutes strategies, and for the last 15 minutes implement with the parent and student known strategies using daily activities and routines. Due to parent and student request, tutoring sessions were redirected to involve the whole family.

Context

Research for this study occurred in the family’s home of the targeted student Bob Lakes. (Pseudonyms will be used for the targeted student and family members.) Most family interactions and family literacy intervention strategies occurred at the family table in the kitchen or in the backyard. The Lakes-Waters home represents a blended family comprised of two parents, Bob Lakes, and 2 siblings (one biological and one step sibling). The Lakes-Waters family resides in a ranch style home in a rural hill top setting overlooking one of the Finger Lakes in Western New York.

Participants

Bob Lakes is the targeted participant of the study. Bob, short for Robert, is a caucasian ten year old boy who has just finished his fourth grade year at Rushville Primary School in Rushville, New York. Robert will be entering the fifth grade in the 2012-2013 school years. (A pseudonym is being used for the school and town to protect the privacy of the family.) There is one primary school (K-5th), one middle school (6-8) and one high school (9th-12th) in the Rushville School District. The economy of the community of the local school district is known for the affluent people that live on the lake and the lower socioeconomic grouping of people that reside all year round often in the town or farmlands surrounding the lake. Middleclass families
are scattered throughout the area and can often be identified as commuters to the City of Rochester for employment.

Bob’s parents are currently separated. As Bob and his brother were growing within the school system, Bob’s parents disagreed as to how to best support their education. A conflict ensued surrounding custody and care of the children. For a time, Bob spent the majority of time with his father who was the primary bread winner. As Bob’s mother was able to provide a stable living and income, Bob began residing primarily with his mother. Currently, Bob resides primarily with his mother, mother’s boyfriend, younger brother, and mother’s boyfriend’s daughter. (Bob refers to her as his stepsister.) Bob visits his father on a rotating schedule splitting a third of the week. Bob’s father is self-employed and works as an electrician at various job sites. Bob takes great pride in his ability to play sports and is currently on a traveling hockey team. Both parents attend games and support Bob in this manner. Bob’s mother volunteers in his class as well as his siblings’ classes.

It was brought to Robert’s mother’s attention at an end of the year review that Bob would benefit from a summer skill program offered by the school to address math skills, reading comprehension, and writing. Bob was against this as he found that school was frustrating and did not hold his attention. Bob is currently at a Guided Reading Level of an S. His spelling skills reflect that of a within word pattern speller and struggles with writing in complete sentences. Bob struggles with comprehension of math strategies and higher level applications such as fractions and algebraic expressions. Bob has attended Rushville Primary School for his entire school career and has received various support services such as math and reading academic
intervention strategies to address math and reading competencies for the past 2 years. At times Bob struggles with anger and communication of frustrations with peers and adults.

Bob’s mother, mother’s boyfriend (stepfather), younger brother, and mother’s boyfriend’s daughter (stepsister) are participants in the study as well due to the extension of the family literacy program. His mother, Samantha Morning Lakes, did not want Bob to have to attend a summer skill program that he thought negatively of. Samantha sought private tutoring services so that Bob could have a positive relationship with an adult and experience with academic support. Samantha sought academic services that would be supportive of her and her family so that she could best support Bob. Samantha is currently expecting her third child with her boyfriend of two years, Robert Nightfall Waters, in September. Samantha is a veterinary technician at an nearby animal hospital and has an associate’s degree. Robert Waters is an auto mechanic at a nearby auto sales location. Together their annual family income is 50,000-65,000 dollars. Both adults are caucasian, are in their mid-thirties, and have resided in the area for their lifetime. Samantha will continue working after the baby is born and will relay upon alternating shifts with Robert, friends and family members to care for her children and newborn child while she is working. Robert is supportive of family measures to address ongoing and literacy interventions for Bob and the rest of the children.

Jenna Waters, is the daughter of Robert Waters. Jenna’s primary residence is in the Lake-Waters’ household and attends Rushville Primary School as well. Jenna is caucasian and is eight years old. Jenna does visit her mother on the weekends during the school year and alternating weeks during the summer. Visitation can be arranged based on parent consent. Jenna will be going into 4th grade this coming 2012-2013 school year. Samantha has expressed concern from parents and teachers that Jenna has fleeting attention and engagement that causes her to
miss important information in class. Samantha, Robert, and Jenna’s mother are working to implement strategies to address Jenna’s engagement and attention to task. Jenna’s current reading levels and supports are not known and have not been assessed.

Matthew Lake, is the younger brother of Robert Lake. Matthew is five years old and will be entering first grade at Rushville Primary School in the Fall. Like Bob and Jenna, Matthew has attended and lived in the Rushville school district his entire school career. Matthew participated in the school district’s universal preschool program and full day kindergarten. Samantha reports that Matthew struggles with reading and writing competencies. Samantha has expressed assistance with addressing reading strategies and resources to support Matthew’s literacy acquisition. Matthew enjoys baseball, soccer, and football. Matthew’s reading levels are not known and have not been assessed for the purpose of this study.

Researcher Stance

Throughout the course of study, I acted as an active participant and passive observer. As an active participant, I engaged and taught the Lakes-Water’s family while providing one on one tutoring to the targeted participant, Robert Lakes (Mills, 2007). I acted as a passive observer at times within the study so that I may observe the parent/family implementation of literacy strategies and engagement of the family/children. In order to gain further perspective and information regarding the success of the program, I reviewed parent interviews, student work, and lesson plans/reflections (Mills, 2007). These perspectives allowed me to look at the information to better assess the family ability to implement and to extend learned strategies.

As a researcher, I am currently a graduate student at St. John Fisher College and am working on obtaining a Master’s Degree in Literacy with certification from Birth-12th grade. I currently have a bachelor’s degree in American Studies and Adolescent Education. I hold my
initial teaching certification in Social Studies 5\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} grade. As I complete my master’s degree in Literacy Education, I hope to gain my certification in Special Education 5\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} grade by taking an additional three classes.

**Quality of Research**

Validity as explained by Mills (2007), drawing from the established theories of Guba (1981) refers to the accuracy of measurement or trustworthiness of the report through established characteristics such as: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to accurately measure student/family success with home literacy interventions, it is important to analyze the quality of interactions and credibility of data to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and outcome of the research.

**Credibility**

To ensure the quality and credibility of research, Mills (2007) maintains that researchers must examine their research and ability to take into account the complexities that occur during a study to establish validity of the research. Large attention and concern towards family dynamics, student/family routines, and student need must be attended to and addressed throughout the study. Not only does this confirm that the research was gathered and presented in an unbiased manner but it provides for dependability or stability of data in order to establish credibility.

**Transferability**

With attention to credibility of data by reviewing collecting and presentation in an unbiased manner, researchers are able to address patterns that may be difficult to explain and offer resolutions that the study reveals. To ensure that at no time were my assumptions or perceived generalizations impacting the study, I have implemented various supports to create a supportive and unbiased nature. Data and various methods were employed to review the
information to ensure consistency in the project and triangulation or sharing of multiple perspectives of the study. Triangulation is beneficial to all studies because it offers various perspectives when reviewing the data to ensure an unbiased review and reflection of information (Guba, 1981). Triangulation of study is provided by the collection of information and perspectives of: parents, children, family members, and teachers. Through assistance from a critical colleague, I am able to address areas of the study that were strong in nature and areas that needed to be reviewed for quality and credibility (Guba, 1981). By practicing such review, I am able to practice not only triangulation or the sharing of perspectives in the study but reflexivity or reviewing my own practices and biases. With such review, neutrality of information can be presented in a more reliable or confirmable manner, void of social underpinnings that can dispute the nature of qualitative research.

**Dependability**

Data was collected using the following methods and presented in the following manner to establish dependability or stability of data (Guba, 1981). Such methods include previous descriptions of opening and closing parent and child informal surveys, formal recorded interviews, and questionnaires. Assessments and student work (artifacts) were used to measure student growth from the beginning period of the tutoring process to the conclusion of the tutoring process. During the tutoring process field notes or observations were gathered based on the perspective of the changing participation required within Group A and Group B from active participant to passive observer. These actions serve to establish the dependability or stability of the data presented. Also the ability to generalize the research so that the research can be followed and completed again by an unfamiliar person in an unfamiliar setting.

**Confirmability**
Throughout the course of the study, strategies were employed reflecting that of Guba (1981) to establish credibility. In order to address the complexities of the study and patterns that are not easily explained that can cause doubt or remove the trustworthiness or credibility of the report the following strategies were employed: prolonged participation, observation, peer review, triangulation, collection of various forms of data at various times within the research time frame, and review of past theories and research process so that the research could be done again if needed.

**Informed Consent and Protecting the Right of the Participants.**

As a qualitative study comparing family home literacy interventions with students that received private tutoring, I asked for written consent and assent to work with parents, children, and teachers involved in the research. Consent forms represent ongoing permission, at any part of the study whether in the beginning, the middle or after the work was completed the participants had the right and opportunity to request not to participate or limit their participation. A consent form was provided and signed by the parent of the participant to work with the family and children. To protect the right of privacy for the participants each person remains anonymous through use of pseudonyms and careful analysis was provided to remove any marks or descriptions on artifacts (student work) or personal descriptions that could be used to identify a specific person (Mills, 2007).

**Data Collection**

Multiple forms of data were collected to ensure credibility of the research. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, data is compiled using the following forms: student and parent questionnaires, student writing assessment, artifacts, lesson plans/reflections, parent interview
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and focus group throughout the study. Due to the changing roles of participation based on the family literacy intervention, I engaged as an active participant and/or a passive observer.

For this study, I created a model family literacy intervention focusing on the literacy needs of a targeted student/participant while constructing a shared family experience through a series of four tutoring sessions. Targeted literacy skills were addressed and implemented using shared family activities and could be used throughout the families’ daily routines. I measured the success of the family literacy intervention model by looking at the engagement of the targeted participant and family members following the use of daily activities and routines as learning opportunities. In order to better understand the child and family background, gain knowledge of the parent’s understanding of tutoring, and student needs as a learner, I gathered several forms of data. These forms of data include: parent literacy questionnaire (Appendix A), student interest survey (Appendix B), and a prewriting assessment (Appendix C).

Sessions lasted 1-1 1/2 hours to address literacy strategies throughout the content areas specifically relating to reading comprehension, word study, and writing reflections. There were a total of four sessions in the observation span of three weeks. The shared strategies used daily routines and current family activities to target literacy needs of the student such as shared family writing (Appendix D), double entry journals (Appendix E), and math messages (Appendix F). Strategies shared with the student and family were reflected in recorded lesson plans (Appendix G). During the session, I provided a model of the strategy and asked the parent to implement this model throughout the span of the week.

Throughout the tutoring process, of four tutoring sessions, student work was gathered throughout the research process to measure progress and adapt to student/parent/family need. A formal lesson plan was designed for each of the four planned tutoring sessions to provide a guide
of the tutoring sessions. As an active participate field notes were recorded following each tutoring session. After three weeks, I assessed growth by reviewing the implementation of literacy strategies across daily family activities and routines. In a focus group manner, I interviewed and recorded the targeted participant and siblings to gauge their reactions of the tutoring sessions (Appendix H). To understand the perspective of the parent, I recorded an interview with the parent following the same questions from the beginning parent questionnaire (Appendix I). Instead of asking what the parents have done in the past, I focused on what the parents are currently doing to support their child since the tutoring process began. Student work was used to compare measurement of family involvement and implementation of strategies within daily activities with interviews of the family and lesson plans/reflections of myself, the instructor.

Data Analysis

After completing the tutoring sessions with Bob Waters and his family, I gathered various forms of data collected throughout the tutoring sessions to review student and family outcome. Data was reviewed in order to better understand the changing participation and exchange of literacy strategies of the targeted participant and family experience. Information was coded in a chronological manner to reflect the movement from a parent/child (targeted participant) focus to a shared family experience.

Student and parent questionnaire, student beginning assessments, and student work were coded first to review student learning preferences and student performance growth. Student and parent questionnaires, student beginning assessments, and student work were coded secondly reviewing student performance growth following shared family experiences noting use of
literacy strategies within tutoring sessions and throughout daily activities and routines. Lesson plans, field notes, instructor reflections and closing interviews were then coded and compared with findings of student learning needs and shared family experiences.

Data was then compared with lesson plans, field notes and reflections to identify correlating themes and perspectives. Upon first review, marked changes occurred in the performance of the student. These changes correlated with the second review of the information coded looking at the shared family experience. The parent actively participated throughout the session by supporting the targeted participant, differentiating instruction for siblings, and facilitating the tutoring session using learned strategies to address literacy goals. The parent exchanged roles as parent and teacher when provided a model of an instructional strategy. The parent took on the role of the instructor and facilitated the session as instructional strategies were modeled. The targeted participant and siblings exchanged ideas and problem solved with the parent to best use instructional strategies within daily family routines. In order to gain further perspective from the targeted participant and family shared experience, teacher made lesson plans, field notes and reflections were used to compare with the chronological review of the changing performance and participation of the student and shared family experience. The third review sought to confirm or disconfirm findings in related to the first coding of student (targeted participant) needs as a learner and the seconding coding of the shared family experience following implementation of strategies within daily routines and activities. Perspectives were compared with the lesson plan outline, reflections and field notes of the facilitator/writer. Correlations were reviewed to confirm or present conflicts within the perspectives and information presented.
Findings and Discussions

While reviewing the collection of coded data throughout the tutoring process of the four sessions, student work and parent implementation of learned strategies within daily activities became more detailed and related to the shared experience of the family. Further analysis of the compiled data revealed three common themes: the needs of the targeted participant as learner, the shared family experience of literacy interventions and strategies, and the use of targeted literacy strategies throughout daily routines and activities. These three themes were supported throughout chronological review and comparison of all forms of data. As student work progressed throughout the tutoring sessions, the information shared became related to day to day life experiences of the student and family members. Given that literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction, family intervention strategies support literacy development among children through attention to individual student needs as a learner, shared familial experiences, and use of daily activities and routines as learning opportunities.

Student Needs as a Learner

Analysis of student interest surveys, student work, and parent questionnaire reveal that the targeted participant, Bob Lakes, as a learner prefers a shared collaborative learning experience rather than isolated independent study. At the beginning of the tutoring process, the model of the family intervention strategy was to include 30 minutes of one on one instruction with Bob, 15 minutes of modeling with the parent literacy strategies across daily activities, and 15 minutes of the parent implementing strategies. The student/targeted participant filled out the Garfield Reading and Writing inventories (Appendix B) to gauge student interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Beginning assessments were used to gain information of the student’s reading level
and writing capabilities. The Garfield Reading and Writing inventories (Appendix B) and beginning writing assessments (Appendix C) highlighted student preferences as a learner. Throughout the course of the four tutoring sessions, information was gathered to assess the ongoing changing participation of the student and performance within the shared family experience and extension of learned strategies within daily life through student work, parent recorded interview, and a focus group session with siblings.

The first tutoring session was used to gather information about the targeted participant and student to better understand the student’s needs as a learner rather than a shared family dynamic using the Garfield Reading and Writing inventories as (Appendix B) and an on demand writing piece (Appendix C). Throughout the Garfield Reading and Writing inventories (Appendix B), the student description of himself as a learner valued shared cooperative learning rather than independent study through defined activities.

Although the data collected is qualitative in nature, the results of the Garfield Reading and Writing Inventory (Appendix B) can best be described using a more quantitative measure. Within the Garfield Reading and Writing Inventory (Appendix B), there are a series of twenty questions for each survey relating the student’s feelings regarding reading and/or writing for recreational or academic purposes. The student is to circle one of the four emotions that Garfield displays that best fits their emotional response to the question (Happiest Garfield, Slightly Smiling Garfield, Mildly Upset Garfield, and Very Upset Garfield). Scores are applied to each response from four to one. Four points reflect the score of Happiest Garfield moving down to one point reflecting the score of Very Upset Garfield. Figure 1 represents the student’s interests as reflected in the Garfield Reading Inventory.
Responses were scored one through four. One reflecting a very upset Garfield, two reflecting a mildly upset Garfield, three reflecting a satisfied Garfield, and four reflecting happiest Garfield. The Garfield Reading Attitude survey or inventory reflects positive attitudes towards reading across home and school environments. Student response to reading activities across home and school environments express enjoyment with sharing learning and creative interactive projects versus skill and drill independent activities. The student displays a negative attitude when demands are placed on time and/or choices as seen in the category of reading during free-time and at school. These findings may reflect the student’s preferred learning style of a shared and collaborative experience with the need for control of his environment. Information regarding the student’s learning style and need for control are further connected to the interest level of the student response of the Garfield Writing Attitude inventory, parent interview, and reflections.
The Garfield Writing Attitude inventory as reflected on Figure 2 indicated a high interest in writing using creative and collaborative measures. Scoring was completed in the same manner as the Garfield Reading Attitude inventory (Appendix B).

![Figure 2. Garfield Writing Attitude Inventory, Student Interest](image)

Responses were scored one through four. One reflecting a very upset Garfield, 2 reflecting a mildly upset Garfield, three reflecting a satisfied Garfield, and four reflecting happiest Garfield.

Out of 28 questions, eleven received a score of either a three or a four indicating a high student interest in the area of writing. These high interest responses were reflected across the creative or collaborative writing experience categories. These interests ranged from the writing process, writing across content areas (social studies, science), and interactive forms of writing.
(journaling, writing a letter, writing about opinions, or various points of view). There were little or no positive responses towards form writing or when writing was placed as a demand rather than a choice (writing during free-time). These findings correlate with the reading interest inventory as well as speak to the student’s preferred learning process and need for control of environment. The student may find enjoyment in writing activities in the school and home environment through use of varied writing forms and strategies across content areas. Creative or collaborative forms of writing is more reflective of content area practices (Social Studies, Science) in academia rather than Math or Language Arts that focus on skill driven practices.

The Garfield Writing Attitude Survey reflected the same (Appendix B). Scoring was completed in the same manner however there were a total of 28 questions without reflection of recreational or academic writing. Out of 28 questions, ten received a score of a six. These responses ranged from feelings towards not writing a lot in school, writing relating to content area subjects (science, social studies), checking for spelling areas when writing, and interactive forms of writing (journaling, writing a letter, writing about opinions or various points of view. Seven responses scored a three which were in regards becoming a better writer, writing letters for various reasons or purposes such as reporting, keeping a diary, sharing writing with a classmate, and receiving criticism regarding writing. Following these responses, the student expressed happiness with writing more in school. Three responses received a score of a one and two responses received a score of a two. These involved responses to writing a long report about something a school, writing telling about something, being an author, and writing instead of watching TV. The responses matched that of the interest the student had in reading and writing various forms creatively and through shared experiences with peers and adults versus on demand independent written response forms of writing. That the student would most likely be exposed to
for academic and testing purposes to improve writing scores. To better gauge the student’s capabilities as a writer, an on demand writing piece was requested at the first session. The student’s response was: “I don’t like to write. Can I write about that?” (June 28th, First Tutoring Session, Field Notes). This response may have been a form of the student expressing likes and dislikes as well as the student navigating control of the writing piece and environment. Freedom was given to the student regarding topic as long as the writing response was at least four sentences. The piece met the requirement of four sentences in length with five sentences, however many sentences were sentence fragments as reviewed:

I do not like to rite because its boring. Also sometimes they are to hard. Also the teachers can be strick to strick. they also make them to hard. That is why I don’t like to rite. (June 28th, First Tutoring Session, On Demand Writing Piece)

When asked to read the piece out-loud the student responded with: “I don’t know how to spell right or write. Homophones are hard for me”(June 28th, First Tutoring Session, On Demand Writing Piece). The student’s deflection of the request to read the requested written response to the topic of spelling, may indicate the student’s need to negotiate control throughout his environment. As well as indicate the student’s capabilities and understanding of language structures. Further explanation was provided for the words right, rite, and write. The student was asked to paraphrase what he wrote. The student expressed that he did not like to write because the process was often independent and he had a hard time meeting the guidelines of the teachers. Further correlating with the student learning preferences of a creative and shared environment and control of environment found throughout the tutoring process.
Throughout the tutoring sessions, when provided with a learning space that was creative and collaborative and on student terms, the student was able to perform. During a shared family reading and writing session at the third session, the targeted participant was able to complete an on demand writing piece that exceeded expectations with use of detail, length, and lacked spelling errors. The writing piece is as follows:

Notes

I think 101 dalmatations is a good book. I like when the dogs drank the milk from the milk. Also I like dogs. I did not like the puppies got stolen. It was cool when her car crashed. It was cool when her car crashed because the puppies would be okay. (July 10th, Fourth Session, Shared Writing).

The writing piece does not reflect the “It Says, I Say and So” process that was modeled and practiced. The piece strictly relates to what the student liked and enjoyed from the reading. The student was able to verbally summarize the book and extend his thoughts with the summary when prompted. The use of modeling and verbal prompting and student performance relates to the strong preferences of the student. When directions are placed on the student that do not meet student direction, the student does not perform or performs outside of given guidelines as reviewed in student work (First Tutoring Session, June 28th, 2012, On Demand Writing Piece, July 10th, 2012, Fourth Tutoring Session, Shared Writing, June 28th).

Parent and student report indicated a growth in literacy skills with support of the student’s learning style across the tutoring session that impacted their families’ daily life and routines. In the focus group session (July 10th, 2012) when asked what had changed since
tutoring started, Bob responded that he “was better with skills.” Bob finished that “Not only was he better at skills but the whole family was better at skills.”

Bob’s response “Not only was he better at skills but the whole family was better at skills” reflected the change of participation from a student/teacher or parent/child model to that of a shared family experience. The change in participation addressed Bob’s needs as a learner through the implementation of literacy strategies through a shared family experience through family daily activities and routines. The parent reported at the beginning of the tutoring sessions through parent questionnaire that “Homework was a struggle” when asked “What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, what is your greatest moment? Does it relate at all with reading and writing?” (Parent Literacy Questionnaire, June 25th, 2012). Throughout the tutoring process, Mom gained insight into extending learning opportunities through use of scaffolding questions and daily activities and routines. After modeling practicing reducing fractions with measuring cups while making boxed rice, Mom explained that she never knew how to push Michael without making him upset and now “she knew how” (Field Notes, Third Session, July 4th). When extensions of literacy strategies were met with opposition from the student with the parent, the parent/student/and instructor were able to address them and problem solve to meet the expectations of the parent and instructor as well as the learning style/needs of the student. With the use of problem solving, the student was able to express his feelings of “being overwhelmed at times by reading,…feeling left out from activities with his siblings,…lack of ability to remember details when writing” (Field Notes, Fourth Session, July 10th, 2012). Parent and student agreed that the student would be able to take breaks and create routines such as a family learning time to reduce frustration. Post it notes would be provided when the student is reading to record details to help when he later writes.
When reviewing successful family intervention models, attention is given to: vulnerabilities of the reader(s), engagement of the parents and extended family members, eliciting and extending learning across daily routines. Little information is found throughout family home intervention models that address the needs of the learner and/or parent to further support the family. Vulnerabilities of the reader(s) and engagement of the parents/extended family members are further related to the socio-cultural and socio-economic understandings of the family in relation to extension of learning across daily routines. Masbach, (1993) does state that depending on the focus of the program implementation may reflect direct or indirect adult-child interactions at home, school, or within the community. Masbach, (1993) does not focus program direction based on the individual or the family. If the learning style and/or preferences of the student had not been addressed in this particular study, the student and family would have little or no success with the family intervention model. Saracho (1997) finds that lack of enrollment, involvement, and retention of families and goals of the program may be the result in the lack of understanding of the cultural and economic diversity of the family. Perhaps then it is not the lack of socio-cultural understandings that limit family retention in national family literacy intervention models but the lack of understandings and attention given to the style and preferences of that of the student and parent as learner(s).

To best identify strengths and needs of the parent and support the parent within family home literacy interventions, the parent filled out a parent home literacy questionnaire at the beginning of the tutoring session. Of the five questions, two questions related to family/parent involvement with learning opportunities or extension of academic skills in the home environment. The engagement of the child and family is to be more focused on facilitating and eliciting interactions that would address literacy practices and goals throughout the family
literacy intervention process (Saracho, 1997). Through the use of daily activities and routines, learning opportunities can be captured to address literacy skills.

For many parents, including the Lakes-Waters family, the use of daily activities and routines, learning opportunities is difficult to put into practice due to one or several of the following factors: parental understandings/background, family schedule/involvement, and differentiation of family member needs. In the study, Parental Beliefs about Ways to Help Children Learn to Read: The Impact of an Entertainment or Skills Perspective, by Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, and Munstermann (1997) found that parents of lower socioeconomic (LSE) groups believed that literacy was a skill that needed to be “deliberately cultivated” (pg. 114). Parents were found to value a skill based approach to learning literacy through flash cards and workbooks rather than through entertainment or play. Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, and Munstermann (1997) further review find that the home and cultural background are facilitated and influenced by parent’s believes and actions. By understanding more about parent’s beliefs, cultural background, and histories, more understanding would be provided as to the parent’s beliefs about how their children learn and develop. These understandings could be as simple as a parent, parents, and/or family have had a difficult time with communication or literacy skills as a student and/or a negative experience in school, or their particular teaching style is reflective of their upbringing or schooling.
Shared Family Experiences

In the beginning of the tutoring process, strong emphasis was placed on facilitating a positive interaction with parent and student to address learning opportunities by modeling instructional strategies and exchanging roles as the facilitator with the parent to encourage the parent and child to continue to extend daily learning activities into family routines. Due to the changing of focus of the tutoring sessions, these opportunities became shared family learning opportunities within the third and fourth final tutoring sessions. These shared learning opportunities served to target word study, reading/math comprehension, and reflective writing goals of the targeted participant. These goals were differentiated to meet the developmental and age appropriate guidelines for the siblings. A math message was modeled on July 4th as viewed in Figure 3 in order to address the goal of increased math comprehension while involving the family and implementation of such strategies throughout daily routines and activities.
The daily math message was to be formed by parents and siblings on a daily basis using family routines as activities as modeled in Figure 3 to draw out math skills or math use. The targeted participant was to complete the math message. At any time the participation may change so that the targeted participant was forming the math message and a family member was completing the message. As the math messages progressed, growth of family involvement increased as exemplified by the nature of the message and insertion of family names within the math message in Figure 4.
Figure 4. Student Work: Math Message, Shared Family Experience, July 8th
The development and use of a daily math message to address needs of the student as a learner through a shared family experience as a family routine or activity indicates an area of growth in the extensions of literacy or value in the literacy event. The purpose of family literacy intervention or support being to extend or support current literacy practices as learning opportunities. Across socioeconomic and cultural descriptions, family and community literacy practices are rich in value. These practices range from storytelling to a recording of daily activities on a family trip in a journal as a way to communicate through oral and printed literacies. The value of the literacy experiences is measured based on the exchange and extension of the experience or the event. As the family is sharing their daily experiences or extending themselves as characters within the math message consistently, they are extending the value of a literacy event. Analysis of value across socioeconomic and cultural classifications of literacy practices that focus on reading materials, literacy experiences, and conversations among the family associated with literacy experiences, and extensions of experiences at home and school environments are found equally (McCarthey, 1997, Korat, Klein, & Segal-Drori, 2007).

Throughout review of the student perspective, Bob was able to express with his siblings changes in family activities and daily routines since the tutoring process in a focus group setting. Jenna’s reflections regarding her reading of cards relates to a word study game that was played throughout the third tutoring session as a family. The game focused on changing endings of words. The game was differentiated to allow participation and strengths of all members to be addressed as well as skills practiced. Jenna’s job was to read the sentence of the card highlighting the word that needed to be changed. When familial strengths are recognized and addressed through literacy strategies, the family is able to take on and extend such practices for the support of the student and family in the home and community. Torgsen (2000) further
emphasizes that family members throughout the course of the child’s relationship, care, daily routines and interactions are the best support in the development of the child’s literacy skills and success as a reader in the classroom. Substantiating that family support extends beyond the parents but would include family members that the child has daily interactions with such as: grandparent, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even siblings. Bruns and Peirce (2012) note that families have many natural contexts in which to create opportunities for practicing skills related to (a) early phonemic awareness tasks, (b) learning new and complex vocabulary, and (c) heightening motivation to read. It may be further interpreted that Matthew wished to take on a greater role in the game and during the tutoring process as Jenna indicated through her responses due to his intermittent responses and distractions during the focus group session as listed in the math message activity. However limited the responsibilities may be such as Matthew’s job of recording tallies in the word study games as expressed in the focus group interview. Matthew is benefiting from natural contexts of the shared family literacy experience to address his own literacy growth. Some of these natural contexts may include identifying and sounding out the letters to a store name, learning new vocabulary words when listening to a conversation that a family member may have over the phone or at a community location, and exposure to a sibling reading for homework a book or member of the family gaining new information from reading a sign out loud. Bob substantiated the theory of natural environment or context when he stated that “We are working with our skills more as a family.”(Focus Group, July 10th, 2012). Bob’s assumed perspective as expressed in the focus group interview further justifies the theory of nature contexts when he countered the response from Jenna that the family does less activities since the tutoring process began with “I disagree, I think we get more. Because when you’re (directing toward instructor) here we act as a family and do family learning stuff. When you’re
not here I do stuff with Mom and we do some stuff as a family (Focus Group, July 10th, 2012).

“Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) describe the natural setting and achievement of these goals when parents talk to their child/children, have conversations with them, tell stories with them, and read books to them.

**Using Daily Routines and Activities as Learning Opportunities**

The parent responded in the questionnaire that they did not use daily activities to create learning opportunities for their child (June 25th, 2012, Parent Questionnaire). The lack of use of daily activities as learning opportunities may be a result of parent background and training. In the study, Parental Beliefs about Ways to Help Children Learn to Read: The Impact of an Entertainment or Skills Perspective, by Sonnencschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truiit, and Munstermann (1997) found that parents of lower socioeconomic (LSE) groups believed that literacy was a skill that needed to be “deliberately cultivated” (pg. 114). Parents were found to value a skill based approach to learning literacy through flash cards and workbooks rather than through entertainment or play. Despite socio-economic status and training, Heath (1983) and Teale (1986), review through ethnographic study and communal research that the family and community provide rich literacy practices and training that early literacy instruction requires to be successful. All experiences can be taught and facilitated through children and family’s daily experiences and natural environment. Samantha further explained that at times the family would go to the library to borrow books for independent reading. Bob struggled with independent reading as he did not want to take the time out of playtime to focus on math skills or reading. Many times the book was too hard or too easy for Bob. Samantha was asked at the beginning of the tutoring process to question 5 of the Parent Literacy Questionnaire, “What is your biggest
struggle, what is your greatest moment throughout the day? (Parent Literacy Questionnaire, June 25th, 2012). Samantha responded with, “Homework time is always a struggle. Sometimes it seems like he didn’t seem like he knew what he read. When he slows down and realizes he actually understands what he is reading.” (Parent Literacy Questionnaire, June 25th, 2012). It may be further assumed that due to Bob’s attitude and learning style that Samantha found it difficult to implement or extend successful learning opportunities throughout the day. It is up to the parent, care giver, or educator to locate the richness of the activity and engage the child (Heath, 1983 and Teale, 1986).

The following tutoring session used current resources set up by the parent (math skills workbook) to set the topic of the session, Associative Property of Multiplication to address the need of support of the parent and child with literacy strategies throughout daily activities and routines. KWL (What do you Know, What do you Want to Know, What have you Learned?), a literacy strategy was implemented to set purpose, address student comprehension, and extension of the associative property of multiplication. With parent and child participation and response to each stage of the strategy, the parent and participant were able to extend and share examples of the Associative Property of Multiplication and the use of the K, W, and L strategy throughout daily activities when looking to understand something or the questioning process of understanding something better. It may be assumed as the parent and student/child moved from a skill and drill process of taking on new information to exploring and using new information in a functional way that the family intervention model was working and succeeding by supporting Bob’s literacy skills (Field Notes, Second Session, June 28th, 2012). By supporting the family unit with quality interactions, the child is provided with another system of support to facilitate ongoing development and strengthening family-school congruence. In the third tutoring session,
when using a boxed rice recipe to review fractions, Bob was able to connect fractions with the measurements of ingredients in terms of \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup or \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup. I continued to press for more efficient ways to measure ingredients to practice and exemplify reducing fractions by asking, “What if Mom only could find her 1 cup measuring cup and she was in a real hurry-how would you show ingredients?” (July 4\(^{th}\), 2012 Field Notes). By focusing on the family unit as the recipient of literacy and other training emphases such as making a family meal, family literacy reaches out to the adult caregiver who will be or currently is nurturing children. Successful interventions (Saracho, 1997) are multifaceted, focus on directly engaging the child by facilitating quality parent-child interactions and quality of the home environment to illicit specific goals.

In order to gauge the success of the family literacy intervention model for support for struggling readers, the parent participated in a closing recorded interview (Appendix I). Interview questions followed that of the parent literacy questionnaire used in the beginning of the tutoring process.

Questions four and five were further compared in Table 1 to assess engagement and implementation of literacy strategies using daily family activities and routines to address the targeted participant, Bob Lakes across the tutoring process.
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<td>How do you use daily activities to create learning opportunities for your child?</td>
<td>I really don’t.</td>
<td>“This one…Oh, I just did one and I can’t remember it. There was one, I just used the other day. It was about multiplication. Oh, I can’t remember it. We just did it together, and I remember it because we were doing something together and it just bopped into my head- and I was like here’s one I can do with him! Oh! I can’t remember! But it was multiplication and it helped him with his multiplication. Well the other day when we were making noodles, I had him measure with me and we reviewed fractions.”</td>
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Question 5: What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, What is your greatest moment of the day with your child? Does it relate at all with reading and/or writing?

| Question 5: What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, What is your greatest moment of the day with your child? Does it relate at all with reading and/or writing? | “Homework time is always a struggle. Sometimes it seems like he didn’t seem like he knew what he read. When he slows down and realizes he actually understands what he is reading.” | “The biggest struggle is to get him to sit down. He does not want to be pulled out of something to work alone. The greatest moment is when we sit down together and work on something together. There are a lot of frustrations on both sides…it would be great if we could get through one time without arguing.” |

Drawing attention to the fourth question in the closing recorded interview listed in Table 1 asked by the instructor, Rachel Hildreth, Samantha Lakes was able to list two activities that she had used as learning opportunities throughout the family’s daily routine. With comparison to, the parent response to question four at the beginning of the tutoring process, “I really don’t.” Growth may be assumed since the beginning of the tutoring process to engage with and implement literacy strategies as learning opportunities throughout the family’s daily activities and routines. Continuing with examination and comparison of beginning and ending responses of the parent, question 5, Figure 1 reveals the work that the parent has put in towards engagement and implementation of literacy strategies with her child and needed ongoing supports. Question five asks “What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, what is your greatest moment of the day with your child? Does it relate at all with reading and/or writing? Parent response at the
beginning of the tutoring process was “Homework time is always a struggle. Sometimes it seems like he didn’t seem like he knew what he read. When he slows down and realizes he actually understands what he is reading.” At the closing of the tutoring process, the parent detailed how she was supporting her child currently and continued need for support. “The biggest struggle is to get him to sit down. He does not want to be pulled out of something to work alone. The greatest moment is when we sit down together and work on something together. There are a lot of frustrations on both sides…it would be great if we could get through one time without arguing.” Comparison of parent responses with the opening and closing of the tutoring process as listed on Table 1 may further substantiate that not only are family literacy interventions justified, they need to be provided on an ongoing basis. The National Literacy Trust (2005) reports that “home visiting can be a very effective mechanism for offering support to parents in the familiar surroundings of their home as it can encompass modeling ways of communicating with children” (p. 2). Often, family members are providing the support and instruction needed for development but need to be encouraged in the process or provided with new alternate strategies to address the child’s growing interests and engagement in higher level skills. Intervention approaches have been justified to address the need to provide parents with strategies to foster literacy in their children (Saracho, 1997).

Implications and Conclusions

Implications

The family and school recognize that there are many risks associated with the desire that would impact the student to reach the goals of being a good reader and successfully finishing school. There is an ongoing need to support Family Home Literacy Interventions to address the
needs of the student or struggling (vulnerable) reader. Children in the primary grades are often recommended by their teachers early on to receive additional support as noted by Feiler and Logan (2007) to be “at risk of under achieving in literacy” (p.132). When looking at the definition of a struggling reader, much attention is given to risk factors that define a vulnerable reader rather than identification of student needs and learning style of the vulnerable (struggling) reader. These children are recommended to receive intervention services based on the challenges that they face to take on literacy skills such as a developmental delay, diagnosis, and/or the families’ ability to locate and access resources (Masbach, 1993). This definition further reinforces social underpinning or assumptions. Justice and Pence (2004) offer a more comprehensive definition for children that may be at risk of failure by defining:

  Vulnerable children as those who must overcome diverse challenges to become successful communicators and conventionally literate. Challenges to development may include environmental hazards, such as: poverty and abuse, as well as developmental circumstances, such as hearing impairment, language impairment, and mental retardation. (p. 174)

When reviewing national and international successful family home literacy interventions such as: LEAP (Feiler and Logan, 2007) and HIPPY (Masbach, 1993) the extension of family was included in home literacy interventions. Thus strengthening the vulnerable child, engagement of the whole family to address the enrichment of literacy interactions, and providing collaboration of community systems for ongoing support and extensions of new learning’s. However, not much definition is given to the process of how to identify the needs of the vulnerable reader, respond the reader’s individual needs, and implement strategies with attention to the needs and learning styles of the family. It is often stated that family intervention strategies
are not successful due to the lack of attention towards socio-cultural and socio economic practices of the family. This may be consistent throughout. However it is also necessary to state that without definition of a struggling reader outside of social underpinnings, specific to the learning style of the student and attention towards the family, the family intervention model will fail.

All experiences can be taught and facilitated through children and family’s daily experiences and natural environment. It is up to the parent, caregiver, or educator to locate the richness of the activity and engage the child. Torgsen (2000) further emphasizes that family members throughout the course of the child’s relationship, care, daily routines and interactions are the best support in the development of the child’s literacy skills and success as a reader in the classroom. Substantiating that family support extends beyond the parents but would include family members that the child has daily interactions with such as: grandparent, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even siblings. Bruns and Peirce (2012) note that families have many natural contexts in which to create opportunities for practicing skills related to (a) early phonemic awareness tasks, (b) learning new and complex vocabulary, and (c) heightening motivation to read. Some of these natural contexts may include identifying and sounding out the letters to a store name, learning new vocabulary words when listening to a conversation that a family member may have over the phone or at a community location, and exposure to a sibling reading for homework a book or member of the family gaining new information from reading a sign out loud. Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) describe the natural setting and achievement of these goals when parents talk to their child/children, have conversations with them, tell stories with them, and read books to them. Further substantiating that the model of the action research project; Family Intervention Strategies, Support for Struggling readers was found
to be successful by providing support to the student and family by implementing literacy strategies across daily routines and activities. Therefore it is further necessary that if the family intervention model is to continue to be successful the family’s learning style and needs must be addressed, strategies provided that fit the family dynamic, and the family must be committed to using strategies throughout their daily routines and activities on an ongoing and consistent basis.

Using the lens of an educator, specifically a literacy teacher the family intervention model would be difficult to navigate and implement successfully when bound to the classroom or on assignment as a reading resource teacher throughout all aspects of the literacy model. Although it is assumed that the instructor would develop and reinforce student literacy goals through age and development appropriate curriculum, the development and reinforcement of a student’s literacy level does not account for time or caseload that the instructor may have to better understand student preferences or needs as a learner. The quality and value of the instructor relationship with the student is further extended to the quality and value of developing a parental and family relationship to understand level of parent literacy and familial need. Without attention to the needs of the learner and parental/family dynamics, modeling and implementing a particular strategy across academic and home environments will not be successful. In order to be successful, the educator must create an ongoing system of communication with the parent, extend this communication to extended family members, and anticipate changing family dynamics that may influence student/family learning opportunities.

Conclusion

Given that literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction, family intervention strategies support literacy development among children who are struggling
readers by supporting shared family experiences throughout the family’s daily activities and
routines to engage and extend literacy strategies. Family engagement with intervention programs
and strategies has been provided to reduce the number of at risk or vulnerable readers upon
entering the primary school age years (Saracho, 1997). By supporting the family unit, the child is
provided with another system of support to facilitate ongoing development and strengthening
family-school congruence. By focusing on the family unit as the recipient of literacy and other
training emphases, family literacy reaches out to the adult caregiver who will be or currently is
nurturing children (Mansbach, 1993).

Children are able to reach pre academic literacy goals prior to the entrance of
kindergarten when provided early, positive, and ongoing family support (Baker, 2003). Family
support is defined by using daily routines and activities to take and make meaning from the
environments to build developmental and literacy skills across socioeconomic status (Health,
1982). Mainstream and nonmainstream children benefit from familial support, education, and
modeling through federal/state funded programs as participation changes from teachers to
parents to address the developmental, socio-cultural, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions of
early literacy skills (Health, 1982, Kucer, 2009). As research indicates (Heath, 1982), various
aspects of literacy skills are engaged in to be successful in the community and home
environments. Ongoing supports and interventions are needed to address literacy skills in a
holistic manner rather than segmenting skills throughout the community and home environments.

Literacy is the reflection of cultural communicative practices of society. As ideas are
communicated and shared among groups of peoples, these exchanges take on new forms and
meanings. Literacy moves from practices of a global society to various subsets of societal groups
identified by culture, community, race, gender, religion, and sexual identification/practice (Gee,
The exploration of how information is gained, how it is interpreted, how it is applied, and what type of means are used to extend or portray an idea are all examples of multiple ways that literacy has been employed across peoples and settings moving from socio-linguistic theory to the socio-cultural learning theory (Goodman, 2001). The sociocultural theory is applied in the classroom by “changing participation” so that all members of the classroom are able to share, use meaningfully, and analyze the everyday practices of their particular group with others across all settings.

By studying the varying practices and perspectives of communities or social groups, the knowledge of how people acquire language and literacy can be gained (Health, 1982). Parents facilitate children’s development of oral language and literacy using daily routines and activities to take and make meaning from their environments. These daily learning opportunities build developmental and literacy skills and are practiced across socioeconomic status from birth (Health, 1982, Kucer, 2009). These practices are often done unconsciously by the parent and child in the exchange of conversation, access to technologies, and routine activities within the community throughout the day. Through study of the family, information can be gained as to how oral language and literacy is acquired and facilitated (Health, 1982).

Within this action research project, I acted as a participant and active observer while facilitating a shared family literacy intervention model with the targeted participant/student, Bob Lakes and family members (Mother, two siblings). A total of four sessions were held targeting literacy and math skill goals of the participant while differentiating instruction for the participant’s siblings. All activities and strategies modeled were designed to be implemented across the family’s daily activities and routines. The mother, Samantha Lakes exchanged roles
with me throughout the sessions acting as an observer, supporting and differentiating instruction for siblings and implementing strategies throughout the family’s daily routines.

The success rate of any family literacy intervention strategies of struggling readers can be based upon the strengthening of each component: vulnerabilities of the reader(s), engagement of the parents and extended family members, and eliciting and extending learning across daily routines. When the parent is provided with instructional strategies that address the needs of the reader(s) and correspond with family dynamics and routines, student/family needs and strengths are addressed. These strategies can be further extended through family planned community activities or differentiated instruction for siblings or extended family members for continuation of literacy success. Home family intervention and programs have come under fire recently due to the high expense rate. As well as the program’s lack of ability to substantiate measurable growth through means other than observation, anecdotal notes, and parent report due to its quantitative nature rather than its qualitative nature. There is substantial material refuting The National Literacy Trust (2005) reports that “home visiting can be a very effective mechanism for offering support to parents in the familiar surroundings of their home as it can encompass modeling ways of communicating with children” (p. 3). When predicting and reporting the possible implications of LEAP (family home literacy intervention model) in England, Gomboy (2004) compared the success rate of the home literacy intervention model with that of the success rate of American based models. Gomboy stated that upon review all American home visiting programs struggled with enrollment, engagement, and retention of families in home intervention programs. Gomboy concluded that families are either not willing or not able to take as much of the services as is intended by program designers therefore not meeting expected developmental goals and lacking in fiscal responsibility.
These same arguments can be substantiated with the findings of this action research project, Family Intervention Strategies; Supports for Struggling Readers. Although growth can be seen in the performance of the student from the first tutoring session to the fourth tutoring session when reviewing student work, parent/student interview and questionnaires coupled with lesson plans and reflections; This growth may be refuted due to lack of time spent with the student and lack of continued review of implementation of family literacy strategies after completed tutoring sessions. The method and implementation of the action research project, Family Intervention Strategies; Supports for Struggling Readers were detailed in description. This particular model may or may not be duplicated based on the following: student needs as a learner and family dynamics. For purposes of fiscal responsibility and correlation of attention to performance driven success, this family intervention model would be defined as unsuccessful.

In terms of definition of success as further described by Saracho (1997) and Mansbach (1993) of family literacy intervention, the model of this action research was highly successful. The intervention model must be multifaceted, focus on engaging the child by facilitating quality parent-child interactions and quality of the home environment to illicit specific goals (Saracho, 1997). Within this action research project needs of the learner, shared family experiences, and literacy strategies were focused towards engagement and implementation throughout extended family members using daily routines and activities. A model or well rounded family literacy program according to Mansbach (1993) must include three items such as:

- Developing and reinforcing children’s literacy level through age appropriate curriculum.
- Enhancing parent literacy and parenting skills based on the intensity of familial need.
Promotion of literacy through modeling and guided parent-child interaction with observation and feedback to address emerging literacy development. (p. 2)

When drawing on the success of a child, one must be careful to review the strengths and needs of the child and family to address support rather than the child’s economic or social grouping. When information is reviewed based on assumptions or unconscious biases, information is misallocated and missed opportunities are created to accurately define, identify, and build successful intervention programs for children in need of literacy skills. In the case of the Lakes-Waters family, if the needs of the student as a learner were not assessed or addressed then the tutoring process would have failed. Through review of the Garfield Read and Writing Attitude survey, parent questionnaire, and correlation with student work, the needs of the student as a learner were addressed through the changing of the tutoring process. When the needs of the learner were addressed by moving from a direct one on one tutoring model to a shared collaborative family experience the student performed. Using a shared family experience model may or may not be successful based on the needs or preferences of the learner and/or family members.

Limitations

Due to the qualitative nature of the program, measurement of growth of the student and family despite the length of any program is hard to justify the level of services and funding when comparing with a program of a quantitative nature. This research project was further limited by the shortened length of the tutoring process. Proven success using engagement and exchange of literacy events through family interaction is as a value term that can easily change in worth as the dynamics of the family change that limits the growth of the program throughout the educational
field. Although many counties and states have a family intervention model there is not reported success using a family intervention model in the primary school years to address literacy skills across content areas. However, it is substantiated that when familial strengths are recognized and addressed through literacy strategies, the family is able to take on and extend such practices for the support of the student and family in the home and community (Heath, 1983 and Teale, 1986). The family intervention model is limited to the response/performance of the targeted participant and family implementation of literacy strategies throughout daily activities. Density of the family unit as noted by the SCHELLS program (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz, 2010) may assist or take away for the growth of the student and/or family if the family intervention model was replicated. Although the SCHELLS program did not use a shared family experience model extending to family members outside the parent/child model, the smaller family unit allowed for increased parent training and completion of skill based training. Depending on the family dynamics and engagement of extended family, the family intervention support model can easily fail.

**Ongoing Need for Family Literacy Intervention, Thoughts for the Reader**

As research indicates (Heath, 1982), various aspects of literacy skills are engaged in, in order to be successful in the community and home environments. Ongoing supports and interventions are needed to address literacy skills in a holistic manner rather than addressing segments of skills throughout the community and home environments. A large resource of the child’s language and literacy acquisition are extended family members, siblings, and/or caregivers beyond the direct contact of the parents as modeled with the shared family experiences of the Lakes-Waters family using daily routines and activities. Since the defining
works of Clay (1980), Health (1983), and Teale (1986) attention has been given to early childhood or primary school age children to foster academic success through defining literacy development and literacy practices of the student, family, and community.

Across socioeconomic and cultural descriptions, family and community literacy practices are rich in value. These activities range from storytelling to a recording of daily activities on a family trip in a journal as a way to communicate through oral and printed literacies. For the Lakes-Waters family this included: daily math messages, shared reading time, and use of skills across family routines such as making a family meal. The value of the literacy experiences is measured based on the exchange and extension of the experience or the event. Analysis of value across socioeconomic and cultural classifications of literacy practices that focus on reading materials, literacy experiences, and conversations among the family associated with literacy experiences, and extensions of experiences at home and school environments are found equally (McCarthey, 1997, Korat, Klein, & Segal-Drori, 2007). When familial strengths are recognized and addressed through literacy strategies, the family is able to take on and extend such practices for the support of the student and family in the home and community.
References


FAMILY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES


Appendix A

*Parent Literacy Questionnaire*
Parent Survey

Home Literacy Interventions

1. What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?
   - Likes to talk,
   - Outgoing,
   - Has a hard time concentrating.
   - Picks out details.
   - Works too fast.

2. What services or supports has your child received to address these areas in the classroom and outside of the classroom?
   - He has AIS in math.
   - He was on the fence for reading but there was too many kids so he was put back in the classroom.

3. Is your child involved in any extracurricular activities? What hobbies do you share together?
   - Hockey, football, summer rec
   - We like to go on walks.
   - We play baseball.

4. How do you use daily activities to create learning opportunities for your child?
   - I really don’t.

5. What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, what is your greatest moment of the day with your child? Does it relate at all with reading and/or writing?
   - Homework time is always a struggle. Sometimes it seems like he didn’t seem like he knew what he read. When he slows down and realizes he actually understands what he is reading.
Appendix B

Figure 1: Garfield Reading Attitude Survey

Responses were scored one through four. One reflecting a very upset Garfield, 2 reflecting a mildly upset Garfield, three reflecting a satisfied Garfield, and four reflecting happiest Garfield.
Figure 2: Garfield Writing Attitude Inventory, Student Interest

Responses were scored one through four. One reflecting a very upset Garfield, 2 reflecting a mildly upset Garfield, three reflecting a satisfied Garfield, and four reflecting happiest Garfield.
I do not like to write because it's boring. Also sometimes they are too hard. Also the teachers can be strict to strict. They also make them too hard. That is why I don't like to write.
Appendix D

Student Work: Collaborative Writing Piece (It Says, I Say, And So), July 4th, 2012

Notes

I think 101 Dalmatians is a good book. I like when the dogs drank the milk from the milk. Also I like dogs, I did not like when the puppies got stolen. It was cool when her car crashed. It was cool when her car crashed because the puppies would be okay.
Appendix E

Student Work: KWL Double Entry Journal July 4th

Johnny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>his real name</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his job</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that was helpful</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>born with hammer in hand</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warp</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>true or false</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appleseed
Appendix E

Student Work: It Says, I Say, And So Double Entry Journal July 10th

It says: John Henry died with his hammer in his hand.

I say: That's cool. That's when I knew John was going to be a special person.

And... I think that... cool that he died with his hammer in his hand. I think that shows strength.
Appendix F

Figure 3: Student Work: Math Message Model, July 4th

Math message

How many ways can use Maths
when eating a pizza?

fractions division
multiplication rounding (money)

Pie chart - How much money?

Rations

You can use fractions, division, rounding and multiplication when eating a pizza
Appendix F

Figure 4: Student Work: Math Message, Shared Family Experience, July 8th
Lesson Plan and Reflection, Session 1, June 25th

Family Literacy Intervention Strategies- Capstone

Student Name (Targeted Participant): Rob Lakes

Parent: Samantha Lakes

Tutor: Rachel Hildreth

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Entering 5th Grade

Reading Level: Not assessed at this time

Date of instruction: June 25th, 2012 12:00 pm

Amount of time for instruction: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Overview/Rationale for instruction:

This will be our first meeting together for the instructor, student, and parents. Much of our time will be spent getting to know one another, setting up for sessions to come and assessments. It is important to get to know one another so that a relationship can be created and interests/motivations known to foster a community learning environment. The instructor must gain through assessments and accurate picture of a child’s reading/writing level, strengths and weaknesses to best support the student.

Strategies:

Parent Home Literacy Questionnaire

Parent: 40 Developmental Assets

Student Reading and Writing Interest Survey

NYS ELA Learning Standards and Core Curriculum:

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Materials/Activities:
FAMILY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Parent Home Literacy Questionnaire
Parent: 40 Developmental Assets
Student Reading and Writing Interest Survey

Assessments:
Dolche Word List Preprimary-Third Grade (Youtube)
6+1 Writing Rubric
Word Study Spelling Words
Running Reading Record

Lesson Plan:

12:00-12:10 pm: The instructor will review with parent and child layout of instructor educational/family, background, action research project, and process of the action research project. Parent and child will share their background, tutoring desire/needs, and consent/assent to be a part of the instructor’s research.

I wasn’t able to get started with the family right away because the parent desired to start after school was out. The parent did not want to put any additional pressure on the child and has sought to make sure that this opportunity will be fun and something that he will look forward too rather than work. Work being that it separates him or makes him feel different than the other kids his age and his siblings. I was able to present the study to Rob as a way that we could help each other. (Research with my class and tutoring with Rob and his class!) Rob has significant trouble with keeping confidence. Rob wants to take on a task and get it done. This has impacted math skills in particular. When reviewing with Mom and Rob the session period (30 minutes with Rob, 15 with Mom and Rob, 15 with just Rob and Mom reviewing things)- Mom and Rob would like a Math and Literacy focus. Mom and Rob would also like to be able to incorporate things with the family so that Rob is not being separated from his siblings.

12:11-12:30 pm: The instructor will review Home Literacy Questionnaire with parent. While the parent is reviewing the questionnaire the instructor will review the student work that the student brought in relation to math and literacy.

I was able to review the Home Literacy Questionnaire with mom later in the session. She did not really want to share very much but she said she really needed to think. She thought that the difference between herself and her son was that she had much more confidence than he does and self-esteem. Mom feels that his home life and school life have impacted his self esteem at times very negatively.

12:30-12:40 pm: The instructor will review Dolce word lists for third grade with the student via flashing words on YouTube to assess student’s sight word recognition.

Mom was excited to see this on you tube! She said that her younger son would benefit from this as well. I showed her how to access the primary levels and various levels for practice.
12:41-12:51 pm: The instructor will review the Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI) with the student to assess spelling accuracy.

*He did very well and was very quick. However some of his blends, digraphs and using the endings appropriately were hard to grasp.*

12:52-1:00 pm: The instructor will administer the Garfield Reading and Writing Inventory for the student. While the student is working on the survey the instructor will review the 40 Developmental Assets Profile with the parent. The instructor will ask the parent to read through and mark areas that she had when growing up. Then to reread and mark the areas that her child has. Then mark the areas that are same or different. What are the parent’s findings? How does this relate to academics?

See above comments. For the Home literacy review- what stood out to me is that mom knew her son very well and strives to have a very positive relationship with him. She is okay with exchanging or sharing interests. Her response to number 4 was very open and honest in regards to daily literacy or learning opportunities. I hope that she will feel like she can do these things in the future!

1:01-1:20 pm: The student will read a series of books on the Kindle while the instructor assesses the reading level of the student through running reading records.

*The student was very excited to see these items on Kindle! He has a Kindle as well! I went to review with Mom and the student reading levels and how to find books per guided reading level on Scholastic Book Wizard. Mom stated that she would do this with her other children when they go to the Library.*

1:21-1:45 pm: The student writes an on demand writing piece in response to the readings while instructor and parent review schedule. Instructor, parent, and child will review the next session and expectations.

*Homework for next session- finding an S level book and App for Math practice on Kindle!*
Lesson Plan and Reflection, Session 2, June 28, 2012

Family Literacy Intervention Strategies - Capstone

Student Name (Targeted Participant): Rob Lakes

Parent: Samantha Lakes

Tutor: Rachel Hildreth

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Entering 5th Grade

Reading Level: S

Date of instruction: June 28th, 2012 7:00-8:30 pm

Amount of time for instruction: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Overview/Rationale for instruction:

This will be our first meeting together for the instructor, student, and parents as a tutoring session. We will be working on the Associative Property of Multiplication and increasing Reading Comprehension. We will be using a KWL strategy to help set purpose and guidance while we are working on math and reading skills to address pacing.

Strategies:

KWL

Associative Property of Multiplication

NYS ELA Learning Standards and Core Curriculum:

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Materials/Activities:

KWL

Math Man!
Assessments:

KWL

Lesson Plan:

7:00-7:10 pm: Review with student and parent trip to the Library and book that his is currently reading.

*Mom described that she had some trouble finding a book and reviewing Book Wizard.*

*Instructor reviewed Book wizard and Math Apps for Kindle. Family was able to locate each item on their own!*

7:11-7:30 pm: Complete timed math facts. Instructor to review the KWL and Associative Property of Multiplication.

*The student expressed that math sheets were boring and did not want to review them that way. Parent and child problem solved that through the math app on the kindle, facts could be timed and practiced in an organized and competitive way. Student stated that he had used a KWL before and taught Mom. Mom formed various numbers and student proved the associative property of multiplication using those numbers.*

7:31-7:45 pm: The instructor reviewed how a KWL could be used while reading. Instructor, student, and parent exchanged
Appendix G

Lesson Plan and Reflection, Session 3, July 4th

Family Literacy Intervention Strategies- Capstone

Student Name (Targeted Participant): Rob Lakes

Parent: Samantha Lakes

Tutor: Rachel Hildreth

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Entering 5th Grade

Reading Level: S

Date of instruction: July 4th, 2012 10:00-11:30

Amount of time for instruction: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Overview/Rationale for instruction:

This will be our second tutoring session and we will be using this session to address math skills and reading skills through family strategies.

Strategies:

Write, Right, Rite

Math Message

Adding and Subtracting Fractions

The E Drop Game

Family Reading- It Says, I Say, And So!

NYS ELA Learning Standards and Core Curriculum:

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Materials/Activities:

Assessments:
It Says, I Say and SO

Lesson Plan:

10:00-10:10 am: Review with student and parent trip to the Library and book that his is currently reading, math app, and work in the work book.

Mom and student reported successful location of a book! (Tall Tales) Completion of Math Apps and Math Book! Mom stated that Michael worked well independently but had some trouble concentrating with his siblings.

10:11-10:30 am: Adding and Subtracting Fractions. Instructor will ask mom to take out a favorite recipe that the student likes. The instructor and family will practice adding measurements, doubling the recipe, making the measurements more efficient. (Reducing fractions.)

Mom said that she doesn’t really use a recipe but boxes. Mom provided a box of pasta. Instructor modeled for parent and student why you would want to add measurements (doubling a recipe) to make it for larger family size or smaller for less people. We talked about using resources efficiently such as if Mom doubled the recipe but only had one measuring cup and didn’t want to move too much (Mom is pregnant) how could she do this efficiently. Michael was able to write out the correct answer and think through the process. Mom stated that she would never have been able to push Michael in this way without him being frustrated- Now she knows how!

10:31-10:45 am: Journals with Math Messages: The instructor advised that math is used everyday such as modeled with the pasta. For the student to see Math in different ways it is important to use daily activities as math practice opportunities. The instructor modeled a math message using a question related to Pizza.

Since the student was excited about going to his dad’s and stated that it was very hard to do work there. Math messages were created to review cost of use of jet skis, etc throughout the summer break. The student was excited to review them with his Dad!

10:46-11:00 am: Reviewed modeled strategies with parent and observe student/parent practice for Rite, Right, and Write.

Parent and student to point out Homophones.

11:01-11:15 am: Family Game: The instructor will implement a game from Words their Way to address suffixes. Will the E drop?, stay the same, or the letter double? A sentence was read using a sample word. Then the player would state whether the e had to be dropped, the word stayed the same, or a letter was doubled when the suffix was added.

This was one of the best things that we did! The female sibling (3rd grade going into 4th) had 2 friends over that were closer to the age of the student and then a younger Kindergarten age sibling. The younger sibling kept score through tallies (as learned in Math) while other children participated. This was
a learning opportunity for all of the children. Mom and Stepdad actively were involved with the question process and eliciting learning opportunities. It was found that the student was having trouble with the -Ion ending. Mom and Step Dad made cards for the ION ending- all wanted to play again!

11:15-11:30 am: Using a book of the students, the instructor would use the strategy It Says, I Say, And So to draw more details from reading to increase reading comprehension and writing with details.

The younger sibling wanted to read a book and be tutored too! So he grabbed his favorite book- 101 Dalmatians. I reviewed IT Says, I Say, And So and modeled this throughout reading. All members wrote down their thoughts and shared them out. Mom helped the younger sibling record his thoughts! Some of the children were not able to extend their thoughts with the And So- Mom modeled how to extend on her own without prompts!
Appendix G

Lesson Plan and Reflection for Planned 4th Session

Rachel Hildreth:

Reflection of 4th Planned session

4th Planned session did not occur due to parent/family dynamics. A planned session was scheduled for June 6th in the evening after the return of the student from his father’s for the Holiday. When the mother met the student at home she realized that he had not done any of his requested work. Also, he did not have his items. They were misplaced in the father’s vehicle. Mother requested some additional time to work with the student. I rescheduled for June 7th at 10am due to preplanned activities. I met with the Mother and student briefly because not all items were accomplished and felt that they could not move on at this time. However Mom reported that what they did complete-the student did very well at and was very receptive to all learning opportunities and suggestions that mom made for details and redo. Mom showed that they had completed math messages together and she had purchased multiplication cards because app on Kindle was not working well. She had reached up to multiples of 3’s with Michael.

I took this time to review with family sessions and how study was doing. Although we had not followed the 30, 15, 15 model- the incorporation of the family was very helpful! Mom and student would like to keep it with the family.

Rescheduled for Tuesday (June 10th) at 7 pm due to parent/family schedule.
Lesson Plan and Reflection, Planned Session 4, July 10th

Family Literacy Intervention Strategies- Capstone

Student Name (Targeted Participant): Rob Lakes

Parent: Samantha Lakes

Tutor: Rachel Hildreth

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Entering 5th Grade

Reading Level: S

Date of instruction: July 10th, 2012 7:00-8:30 pm

Amount of time for instruction: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Overview/Rationale for instruction:

This will be our fourth tutoring session. This session will have a family focus as parent and student have requested focusing on proportions and building a family poem.

Strategies:

Math Message

Proportions

Building a Poem

NYS ELA Learning Standards and Core Curriculum:

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Materials/Activities:

Math Message

Proportions

Building a Poem
Assessments:

Math Message

Proportions

Building a Poem

Lesson Plan:

7:00-7:10 pm: Review with student Math Messages, Math Skill Building (Multiplication facts and Division Facts) and previous homework.

Mom asked the student and siblings to play outside while she spoke with me a bit. Mom stated that she tried to get her son to focus and do his work but he blew up at her so she stopped. She was able to redirect him but not all of his homework is done. Mom stated that she is not really sure why he blew up at her but feels it’s because of his father. Mom reported that during stay with Dad nothing was done and that her son feels that he is being targeted when the other siblings are not doing work. Also she recently received a call from a family member that cares for her son when he is in his father’s care that lens her to believe that the home is not stable or supportive. Mom was not sure if he is having some anxiety in regards to the home atmosphere. I used this time as the student came back in to review the circumstances as to what happened. The student says that he is not sure why he blew up and is sorry for it now but doesn’t really know what upset him. He did say that he felt a lot of pressure to get things done. I was able to review with him there was not a lot of work however if he felt overwhelmed maybe he could take a break. Also the student stated that he was feeling left out in a lot of ways from his siblings and activities when he was doing his homework. Mom suggested that this weekend when the children are with their Dad that she will build some lessons so that they will have a family read time where everyone is doing work together. The student was very excited about this and he offered some suggestions and ideas about doing KWL’s together and It Says, I Say, and So. The student also expressed a lot of frustration about writing because his mom would like him to pull out the details more when he is writing. The student said that he notices a lot of details when he is reading but cannot think of them when he is writing. I was able to offer some ideas about using post it notes. Mom said that she would buy post it notes for her son and get him a more interesting book as well. The student then said he would ask for a break next time when he feels upset so he can cool down and think about his feelings and why he is upset. This put us behind a great deal in time but family was able to problem solve quite a bit.

7:11-7:22 pm: Using Proportions. The instructor will define proportions. The instructor will then ask the student to find words that he knows with the word proportion. (Rate, Ratio, Fractions) Using these located words, the instructor will ask the student to define those words. How do you think that they are all related? The instructor will ask for three examples of proportions in daily life. (Pizza, Miles per hour, price per pound). The instructor will then ask the student to build proportion tables using traffic signs and a grocery ad.
The student was able to locate rate and ratio. Mom helped with fraction by giving the student clues about the spelling and definition as well as what a fraction looks like. From there the student was able to define and list proportions. Mom helped the student with the tables and solve a difficult math message. The instructor gave some tips as to how to reduce fractions. It was at this time that instructor noticed large weakness with divison and fractions. The instructor and mom made some plans to make sure that practice was done in a competitive manner.

7:23-7:35pm: Lesson regarding adding the-ION. Since mom had noted that she had been working with the student in regards to -ION, the instructor will assess knowledge.

Mom reviewed her words. The student demonstrating continued difficulty in this area. I reviewed with mom that we will need to scaffold these words and gave mom some resources as to how to do that. I will make plans to meet with Mom separately to review with Mom how to plan a lesson.

7:36-7:50 pm: Family Poetry: Building a Poem. The instructor shared that each family member would write a phrase or sentence. Then we would read it out loud and build a poem.

This did not work very well. We discussed what could make our poem better and how to arrange it. This is where the real learning came in as the children adjusted it and shared their changes with details.

7:50-8:00 pm: Family Focus Group and Interviews for Closing of Session

A focus group was held for the siblings to answer questions relating to the tutoring sessions of family literacy interventions they have received. This was recorded. The first question was to fill in the blank, “Since I started tutoring, I…” The second session was “When we played a game, I…” The third question was “My Mom and I do…”
K, W, L’s when reading a passage.

*Student was excited to share about the KWL and taught mom. I was able to model for mom how to pull more information out from KWL from student to gather more details by eliciting or asking questions.*

7:45-8:00 pm: Reviewed modeled strategies with parent and observe student/parent practice.

*Homework for next session- finding an S level book, practicing App for Math practice on Kindle, and Associative Property of Multiplication!*

**We had a lot of interruptions at the home from other siblings. Also the student was very disappointed and expressed frustration that he was not able to interact with them or he was not getting enough quiet time. Other siblings requested playmates to come over as well. Instructor and Parent problem solved to make next session more interactive.**
Focus Group Transcript, July 10th, 2012

Participants: Siblings: Bob Lakes, Jenna Waters, and Matthew Lakes

Parent: Samantha Lakes

Instructor/Facilitator: Rachel Hildreth

Transcript:

Rachel Hildreth: “As a group I am going to ask a couple of questions. One way that we have been tutoring is as a family like last time we read the story and played the game. I was wondering for my study what your experience was as a family with tutoring?”

Bob: “That word game was fun.”

Matthew: “Kinda fun because I did the tallies.”

Rachel Hildreth: “One way that we learn together is a family…”

Jenna: “Family Fun Facts!”

Rachel Hildreth: “Yes! Family Fun Facts! Now I am going to ask a couple of questions. Since I started tutoring Bob, what has changed? Did anything change or did it stay the same?”

Jenna: “Bob’s gotten better!”

Bob: “At what?”

Matthew: “Kinda better.”

Jenna: “I don’t know...at spelling and reading because we did those games.”

Rachel Hildreth: “How as this changed your family Jenna? Did you change?”

Jenna: “I read better. I read those cards. Samantha says...right Samantha? Didn’t I read better with those cards?”

Samantha: “MMHmmm.” (Approvingly)

Bob: “We are working with our skills more as a family.”

Jenna: “I am a lot better with my fluency because I have to read and explain for Bob.”

Rachel Hildreth: “Oh Fluency!” “Bob, what do you think?”
Bob: “It helped everyone with skills they needed, not just me!”

Jenna: “Family Fun Facts!”

Rachel Hildreth: “Okay Matthew, you said the game you played was sorta fun. How was it sorta fun?”

Matthew: “Kinda fun.”

Rachel Hildreth: “How was it kinda fun? You used the tallies...”

Matthew (squirmed underneath the chair and shook his head):

Jenna: “Matt, Matt!” (Shook her head) “I think he wants to do more than just tallies next time.”

Rachel Hildreth: “Since Bob started tutoring do you do less or more family activities?”

Bob: “We do more!”

Jenna: “No because I don’t get to do all the time.”

Bob: “I disagree, I think we get more. Because when you’re (directing toward instructor) here we act as a family and do family learning stuff. When you’re not here I do stuff with Mom and we do some stuff as a family.”

Jenna: “But I don’t get to do that all the time.”

Bob: “I have an idea how! When I finish my homework. Then you (pointing towards Samantha) could make up some questions so you know the answers. So then you (pointing towards Jenna) could ask me questions.”

Jenna: “But what if I don’t know the answers?” (Attending to Matthew who was over by the door.) “Matt, Matt!”

Bob: (Pointing towards Samantha) “Well you could explain to Jenna and Jenna could explain to me.”

Jenna: “What if I don’t know it?”

Rachel Hildreth: “Who could you ask if you don’t know it, Jenna?”

Jenna: “We could talk to Sam and she will help us or we can just try to figure it out together.”

Rachel Hildreth: “Thank you guys for your hard work and honest answers.”
Appendix I

Parent Interview, July 10th

Family Literacy Intervention, Support for Struggling Readers

Transcript: Closing Recorded Parent Interview

July 10th, 2012

Participants: Samantha Morning Lakes (Parent/Participant), Rachel Hildreth (Instructor/Facilitator)

Rachel Hildreth: “At the beginning of our tutoring sessions together, I asked you to fill out the Home Literacy Questionnaire. These are the same questions, the responses will be compared to the beginning responses at the start of tutoring. Please answer them honestly. What are your child’s strengths and weaknesses?”

Samantha Lakes: “He is a good reader. He has a hard time with getting the details. He blurs all of the sentences together.”

(Family member asked to stop recording to ask a question.)

Samantha Lakes: “He is a good reader, he just has to pull out the details. For his math skills, his weaknesses are multiplication facts. He has hard time getting those to stick.”

(Family member interrupts, “I need my helmet- HiYah! (Toward instructor) “You’re recording Mom?”)

Recording Paused

Rachel Hildreth: “What services or supports has your child received to address these areas in the classroom and outside of the classroom?”

Samantha Lakes: “He did go out for AIS for Math. For his reading he was right on the fence so he stayed in the classroom and they helped him there.”

Rachel Hildreth: “Is your child involved in any extracurricular activities? What hobbies do you share together?”

Samantha Lakes: “He goes to summer rec. He’s starting football this year and he does hockey. We do sit down together and read together. We do bike rides and walks together. We don’t really share too many activities...I’m not...” (recorder couldn’t hear remainder of answer.)

Rachel Hildreth: “How do you use daily activities to create learning opportunities for your child?”
Samantha Lakes: “This one...Oh, I just did one and I can't remember it. There was one, I just used the other day. It was about multiplication. Oh, I can't remember it. We just did it together, and I remember it because we were doing something together and it just bopped into my head- and I was like here's one I can do with him! Oh! I can't remember! But it was multiplication and it helped him with his multiplication. Well the other day when we were making noodles, I had him measure with me and we reviewed fractions.”

Rachel Hildreth: “What is your biggest struggle throughout the day, what is your greatest moment of the day with your child? Does it relate at all with reading and/or writing?”

Samantha Lakes: “The biggest struggle is to get him to sit down. He does not want to be pulled out of something to work alone. The greatest moment is when we sit down together and work on something together. There are a lot of frustrations on both sides...it would be great if we could get through one time without arguing.”