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## A Middle School Mathematics Teacher's Exploration Of The Relationship Between Parent-teacher Communication And Student Achievement

Viana Pierre Gilles  
*University of Central Florida*



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**A MIDDLE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS TEACHER'S EXPLORATION OF THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION AND  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

by

**VIANA PIERRE GILLES**

B.S. KEAN UNIVERSITY, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education  
in the School of Teaching, Learning and Leadership  
in the College of Education  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Major Professor: Lisa A. Dieker

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research study was to increase the overall achievement gains of my students who are currently receiving overall grades below a 69% in my middle school mathematics class by promoting parental involvement. The purpose of my action-research study was to answer the following three research questions:

1. What changes occur in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts are made over a six-week period?
2. How can I promote parental involvement?
3. What can I do to educate parents on how to become more effectively involved in their child's education?

To answer these questions I selected ten parents, whose children were currently receiving grades below a 69% in 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and who have not contacted me after the first nine weeks of the semester. I used three different methods to contact the parents, phones call, emails, and notes in students' planners. All three methods showed a lack of parental feedback and involvement. Nevertheless, five students showed an increase in the second marking period, four showed a decrease, and one stayed the same.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First I would like to thank God, the almighty who made it possible for me to accomplish this action research paper. He gave me strength and courage to overcome all the adversities and the brick walls that could prevent me from pursuing my education.

Second, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my chair/advisor Dr. Dieker, Lisa, who helped me write this action research paper. I remembered being completely discouraged, thinking it may be too late to put it together, but Dr. Dieker somehow lifted my spirit. Her enthusiasm, patience, and words of praise encouraged me to keep going and made me believe in myself. Her constructive feedbacks motivated me to try harder. I could not ask for a better chair.

I also want to thank the rest of my thesis committee, Dr. Bonnie Swan, and Dr. Janet Andreasen for their support in writing this paper.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Rational.....	1
Theoretical Framework.....	2
Conceptual Framework.....	3
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Definition of terms.....	4
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Definition of parental involvement.....	7
Level of involvement.....	7
Parent’s Expectations.....	8
Teacher-Parent Communication.....	10
Homework Help at Home.....	11
Promoting Parental Involvement.....	12
Counter Examples.....	13
Statement of the Problem and Hypothesis.....	14
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Research Questions.....	15
Subjects.....	16
Variables.....	16
Setting.....	16

Procedure.....	19
Phone Calls to Parents .....	20
E-mail Contact with Parents .....	21
Notes Home with Students.....	21
Teacher Reflection .....	22
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS .....	23
Promoting Parental Involvement.....	28
Phone Calls.....	28
Notes and E-mails .....	29
Educate Parents .....	29
Validity .....	31
Reliability.....	32
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	33
Contributing Factors to Parenting Involvement .....	33
Parent’s Expectations.....	34
Students’ Responsibility.....	35
Homework Help at Home .....	36
Teacher-Parent Communication.....	37
Conclusion.....	38
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	40
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT .....	42
APPENDIX C: WEEKS 1 AND 2 PARENT CONTACT .....	45
APPENDIX D: WEEKS 4 AND 5 E-MAILS TO PARENT.....	55
APPENDIX E: WEEKS 5 AND 6 STUDENT PLANNER NOTES TO PARENTS .....	60

LIST OF REFERENCES ..... 66



## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1 Recording log of parental contact .....	18
Table 2 Parental contact log for e-mail and student planner .....	18
Table 3: comparison of first and second nine weeks .....	24
Table 4: comparison of three methods of collecting data .....	31
Table 5: Weeks 1 and 2 Phone Calls to Parents.....	46
Table 6: Weeks 3 and 4 e-mails to parents .....	56
Table 7: Weeks 5 and 6 Notes in Planner to Parents .....	61

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Rational

Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stigler, Hsu, and Kitamura (1990) concluded that students' academic achievement is related to a number of factors including "their intelligence, their experiences at school, and their experiences at home" (p. 4). In my opinion, parents and teachers hold the key to the future of a child's success. It is my experience as a teacher that having an actively involved parent helps. I believe both parents and teachers must be involved to make the partnership work. We both must work together under one vision and one goal to ensure successful outcomes in education and life. Parents should be responsible to reiterate and reinforce the procedures their children are receiving from school and at home.

On one hand, I saw students completely disinterested, unmotivated, unwilling to do any work in class, or refusing to turn in any homework. I often asked myself, what was the role of their parents in their education? On the other hand, I also saw students who came to my class with a purpose. Those students usually got everything done without coercion. They were eager to participate in class activities. Some would cry if they ever failed a test. They would beg me for a second chance to make up the test, because they are afraid of what Mom or Dad would say. What I noticed in those students is that their parents were actively involved in their education. Those are the parents who show up in open house, check progress reports, and call or email me when they have concerns about their child's progress in my class. I often wonder if I should generalize and assume that students are failing because of a lack of parental involvement. This question led me to the following action-research study.

For this study, I reviewed many previous studies on parental involvement. Most of that work showed a direct relationship between students' outcome, proficiency in math, and academic achievement. The majority of the literature I reviewed indicated that parental involvement in a child's life is tied to student engagement in academic activities leaving students with a stronger sense of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in mathematics. Most of the studies demonstrated that when parents have high expectations for their child's academic success and value education, students are more interested, engaged, and confident towards academic endeavors.

### Theoretical Framework

Increasing parental involvement which in turn increases student academic achievement has been a focus in education for many decades (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Despite several attempts to increase parental involvement at the district and the school level, it seems like more genuine effort needs to occur to persuade parents about the importance of parental involvement in education. Even President Barack Obama, is trying to promote parental involvement. He was recently featured in NBC Universal's Emmy award-winning, *The More You Know*, public service campaign with messages focusing on parental responsibility in education; he said that:

We all know that we can have the best schools and the most dedicated teachers in the world, but it won't be enough unless we fulfill our responsibility as parents. It's up to us to inspire our kids to learn and set aside time to read with them, to make sure they're prepared for classes each morning and help them with their homework at night. It's up to us to go to those parents-teachers conferences and keep up with their progress every steps of the way. So

this year let's do our best so our kids can do their best (Obama, 2010).

In my opinion, some parents are not willing or perhaps unable to take the necessary steps to bridge the academic gaps caused by the lack of parental involvement. From my experience, most educated, wealthy, or linguistically well-versed parents seem more eager to participate in their children's education. They set high expectation, communicate with teachers, and help with homework but I wondered in my action-research if I made the effort if parents would return the effort.

### Conceptual Framework

The basis for conceptualizing the relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement relies on distinguishing the most effective types of involvement and the extent to which that involvement can positively relate to student's achievement. I examined various forms of parental involvement to include parent's expectations, teacher-parent communication, and homework help at home. I chose these areas because I felt they were the most critical forms of involvement that could positively impact student achievement without creating negative criticisms or punishment at home.

### Statement of the Problem

The ultimate purpose of this research study was to increase the overall achievement gains of my students currently receiving grades below a 69% in my middle school mathematics class. To facilitate the process, I investigated the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance. Furthermore, the purpose of this research study was to answer the following three research questions:

1. What changes occur in students' mathematics grade point average when a variety of teacher-parent contacts are made over a six-week period?

2. How can I promote parental involvement?

3. What can I do to educate parents on how to become more effectively involved in their child's education?

I investigated the changes that occurred in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts were made over a six-week period and then determined whether there was a relationship in middle school students between the amount of parental involvement and their mathematical achievement. Participants in this study included ten parents whose children were currently receiving an overall grade below a 69% in 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and who had not contacted me after the first nine weeks of the semester. The students in my classroom were from an urban middle school in central in Florida. I collected both math grades and the various form of parental contact made over a six-week period. I then reviewed the data to see if there were any connections between my contact with parents and changes in grade.

#### Definition of terms

Parental involvement: refers to the amount of participation parent has when it comes to their child's education or how involved a parent is in his or her child's education

Parent participation: is used interchangeably with parental involvement

Academic achievement: is defined as student's ability to reach his or her full potential

Parent's expectation: the level of a parent's educational, aspiration for their children and how they set goals, structure, consequences and reward for their child, when it comes to behavior.

Effective parent-teacher communication: when parent and teacher work closely in a cooperative or a partnership relationship focusing on the best way to help a student achieve success. When parent meets with a teacher and the teacher informs the parents or guardian of the child's progress or lack thereof.

Homework help at home: when parents are actively engaged in their kids' homework, not by doing it for them, but by supporting them. For example, setting a high standard of personal responsibility, checking the homework, or making sure the TV is off during school days. If parents do not have the ability to help or check the homework, they may provide the kids with resources such as internet access.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### Introduction

Legislators are holding teachers accountable for students' mathematics achievement based on a single state mandated test, which is the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Are teachers really the key to students' achievement? Or, are there some other contributing factors leading to students' achievement? A child's education is a joint responsibility between the teacher, the parent, and the student. All parents, teachers, and students, must assume their role to ensure students' success and achievement. Although teachers play the primordial role in a child's academic achievement, parental involvement adds the ingredients needed to complete the job to perfection. However, some parents may not view their role in this way nor can they afford the time or energy to do so. According to a study by Brandon, Higgins, Pierce, Tandy, and Sileo (2010), which focused on alienation experienced by parents from their children, some parents may have two jobs, multiple children or even a fear of education and therefore do not have the time or maybe even the desire to get involved in their children's education. Some parents do not know how to get involved mainly because middle schools are large and complex, which make it difficult for parents to become effectively involved. (Hill & Tyson, 2009)

Many research studies showed that parental involvement is a contributing factor to students' mathematical academic achievement (Crosnoe, 2009; Fan & Williams, 2010; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Phillipson, 2009; Sirvani, 2007; Yan & Lin, 2005). The aim of this action-research study was to investigate the relationship of academic achievement and homework completion of middle school students in mathematics when parental and teacher

communication increases. The following research questions were examined: What changes occur in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts are made over a six-week period? How can I promote parental involvement hence, increase students test scores in my class? What can I do to educate parents on how to become more effectively involved in their children's education?

### Definition of parental involvement

According to Fishel and Ramirez (2005), the definition of parent involvement has changed throughout the years from an exclusive focus on specific activities and roles played by caregivers to an inclusive emphasis on a wide range of parent activities that support children's learning. They refer to parent involvement as the participation of significant caregivers (including parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents, etc.) in the educational process of their children in order to promote academic and social well-being. Moreover, Crosnoe (2009) viewed parental involvement as continuous communication between home and school to ensure youths, especially those from historically disadvantaged groups, were successful in daily classroom events.

### Level of involvement

A plethora of research exists focusing on parental involvement in education. In my own teaching, I have seen legislators, and school district personnel, doing everything to stress the importance of getting parents involved in their children's education. For instance, school principals conduct PTSA meetings and SAC meetings monthly, and parents are volunteering in the school while counselors are conducting parent-teacher conferences. All of these activities, in



part, are designed as a way to lure parents into the school to increase parental participation. Despite seeing a range of initiatives as a classroom teacher, I can attest that in my school these initiatives are not working for many of my students. As Hill and Tyson (2009) noted, in their study of parental involvement in middle school, researchers need to distinguish the most effective types of parent involvement and the extent to which that involvement is positively related to middle school students' achievement. Therefore, for my action research project, I decided to try a variety of parental involvement techniques to ascertain what works best with my students in my classroom.

My study parallels, what is shown in research on parental involvement. Boethel (2003) stated that there is considerable variation on the level of involvement and this variation is typically closely correlated to the socio-economic position and ethnic background of the parents. This study examined three levels of involvement; namely parents' expectation, teacher-parent communication, and homework help at home with parents of students from diverse populations currently in my seventh grade mathematics classes.

#### Parent's Expectations

Phillipson (2009) proposed that parents play a critical role in the development of their children related to academic achievement. In a recent longitudinal study conducted by Fan and Williams (2010), they analyzed the effects of parent involvement on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement and intrinsic motivation. Using a sample size of 15,325 adolescent and parents, the result revealed that parental involvement in a child's life is correlated with student engagement in academic activities, a stronger sense of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in mathematics. The study demonstrated that when parents have high expectations

for their children's academic success and value education, students were more interested, engaged, and confident towards academic endeavors.

Based on another research study on academic achievement, Phillipson (2009) found that parent expectations played a major role in student achievement. All the schools in Phillipson's study showed a positive and significant correlation between parent expectations and mathematics achievement. This research prompted my need to increase parental involvement in my own classroom. Since my primary role as a teacher is to instruct students who are low level achievers in mathematics. I felt I should not try to address the students' needs alone. Therefore, I decided to see if I could increase parental involvement related to how students should behave in school and the importance of their children's achievement in mathematics. I anchored my research in Phillipson's work to see if I can increase parental contact to help alleviate discipline and academic issues to help each student reach his or her full potential in mathematics.

Yan and Lin (2005) examined three dimensions of parents' involvement across four racial and ethnic groups. They found that educational expectations benefited all racial and ethnic groups. Their study proved that educational expectations were directly related to mathematics achievement. They also found that high expectations across all ethnic groups had an impact. Since the families I work with are from diverse backgrounds, using the work of Yan and Lin provided a foundation for trying equal approaches across different cultures to increase parental contact. The key component of my strategy for my action research study was to increase teacher and parent communication.

### Teacher-Parent Communication

Communication between parents and teachers is a contributing factor to student success. In a research study conducted by Sirvani (2007), she examined the impact that teacher communication had on students' mathematics achievement by taking a sample of 55 algebra students, Sivani found that parental involvement significantly contributed to the achievement of all students from primary and secondary schools, which was supported by other researchers like Epstein (1995), and Henderson and Berla (1994). Moreover, other researchers have found that when parental involvement increases, a more trusting and positive relationship results between teachers and parents (Bauch, 1994; Watkins, 2001). Although the literature supports parent involvement, there are also some noted constraints that could prevent the effectiveness of parent-teacher communication. Often, teachers are so busy between planning and teaching, that there is little time left to call parents, which creates a gap between teacher-parent communications. "Parental involvement should be part of a school administrator's responsibilities rather than a teacher's, since teachers need to spend their time on instruction and its preparation" (Sirvani, 2007, p.42). In addition, Zhao and Akiba (2009) continue to say that: "a lack of instructional recourses may constrain teachers' time and energy to communicate with parents" (p.414). At the secondary level much of the communication needed to occur is often centered on three areas in my classroom homework, grades, and behavior. For my action research project, I decided to focus on increasing communication about homework to see the impact on completion rates and grades. The literature clearly supports the impact of homework assistance and completion on students' mathematics achievement.

### Homework Help at Home

Homework help at home is a contributing factor to a student's achievement. When parents are actively involved in their children's homework, the completion rate of homework increases and students tend to study more effectively, and do better on test and quizzes (Bailey, 2006). In a study conducted by Mills (1989), results of parent evaluations showed that parents who learned the value of mathematics homework began to accept more responsibility for encouraging their children to complete schoolwork at home, and learned mathematical teaching methods. Through parents' involvement, the study showed that 41 out of 51 students raised their rate of consistent homework completion, which, in turn, resulted in an increase in their mathematics test scores and overall mathematics grades. Moreover, in another research study, Sirvani (2007) speculated that parents who monitored student's homework at least twice a week contributed to improving overall student academic achievement.

Homework completion is very important to excel in mathematics. Practice makes perfect when it comes to mathematics, but I do not give homework for the sake of doing it. I see homework as a way to reinforce the concepts taught in class. Bailey (2006) tested a hypothesis between students' test scores and the average time parents spent helping their children with homework; the author found a statistically significant correlation between the two variables. Despite the importance of parents being involved in homework, for some of the families in my classroom just prompting students to complete homework may be all they can contribute due to language differences. Therefore, for my action research study I want to

focus on prompting parents to ask about and monitor homework to whatever level of time or ability they might have available.

### Promoting Parental Involvement

In a recent study conducted by Zhao and Akiba (2009), they found that school expectations for parent participation are highly proportional to students' mathematics achievement in the United States. An analysis of the data showed that students intend to do better in mathematics when school principals set expectations for parents to provide home-based support by making sure homework is completed and that parents communicate with schools whenever students have problem at home. In their study, Fan and Williams (2010) concluded that parents' participation in school functions is positively related with students' mathematics self-efficacy. Although what teachers and schools can do to promote parent involvement is limited, the role of the school to promote parent involvement is crucial (Zhao & Akiba, 2009).

Yin and Lin (2005) found that several variables can impact parental involvement including income level, marital status, and proficiency with language. Although the reasons minority parents' participation may be limited in education could be caused by a number of reasons, Zhao and Akiba (2009) noted that all parents are concerned with their children's education. However, the opportunity to get involved in their children's education may differ. For parents from different backgrounds, ethnicity and socio-economic status, the opportunity to become involved may be erratic. Ho (2006) commented on the effect that family structure, ethnicity, and socio-economic status can have on family involvement in education. She concluded that, a lower level of cultural communication and parental supervision of homework takes place among immigrant students. She continued to argue that single parents have less time

to communicate with their children or to supervise homework completion, but this lack of involvement will eventually affect their children's academic achievement. So it is the school district's role, the principal's and administration's role, and the teacher's role to do everything they can to include all parents as much as possible and as often as possible in the education process, because teacher's and administrator's attitudes can impact parental involvement significantly (Arias & Morrillo-Campbell, 2008). Including various cultures and backgrounds while setting high expectations for parents will lead to a better support system, which in turn will improve student achievement (Zhao & Akiba, 2009). As Yan and Lin (2005) stated, "educators should inform parents of at-risk students about the importance of the contributions of parents' high educational expectations, helping these parents reach a high level of agreement between them and their children regarding these expectations in boosting the students' mathematics achievement" (p. 125). Therefore, to effectively promote parental involvement, it is the role of teachers and administrators to help those parents and their students to excel by overcoming any adversity they face. The point of my action research is just that, to investigate multiple ways to increase parental communication for parents from diverse backgrounds.

#### Counter Examples

Although there is a strong theme in the literature to support parental involvement and student achievement, other studies have led to different conclusions. Bal and Goc (1999) found that student mathematics achievement did not improve when parents were involved in helping their children. Hynes (2006) found no difference existed in the amount of parental involvement between high achieving and low achieving students. Furthermore, in previous research conducted by Driessen, Smit, and Slegers (2005) on parental involvement and educational

achievement, they found that parents played little or no role in schools with a high percentage of ethnic minority pupils. Their study could not establish a direct effect of parental involvement. In addition, Fan and Williams (2010) concluded that “parent-school communications concerning students’ school problems can easily lead to certain discouraging conversations, criticisms or punishments from parents, which decrease student’s confidence, interest and engagement in learning” ( p. 69).

Despite some findings that lead to parent involvement not making a direct impact, there were some limitation attached to the Fan and Williams study. They admitted that they may have neglected important aspects due to the wide scope of parental involvement. The ELS 2002 data used by Fan and Williams (2010) was limited. Their study showed that they were unable to establish causality between the variables. Sirvani’s sample size suggested bias toward her student because it was a convenience sample since the participants were her students, which could have prevented generalization.

#### Statement of the Problem and Hypothesis

Teachers and parents are all seen as partners with their students, but they also must share tasks and responsibilities (Hall & Santer, 2000; McNamara et al 2000). A student’s success is a joint responsibility between the teacher, the child, and the parent. The research literature clearly indicates that parents should be involved by setting up high expectations, communicating with teachers, and helping with homework as they are capable. The purpose of this action-research study is to investigate the relationship between parental involvement and student homework completion.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### Introduction

Research clearly shows that increasing parent involvement increases student learning gains (Crosnoe, 2009; Fan & Williams, 2010; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Phillipson, 2009; Sirvani, 2007; Yan & Lin, 2005). This action research project allowed me to assess the outcomes of using three different methods of communication with parents who are culturally and/or linguistically diverse, and who have not made direct contact with me despite several opportunities after the first quarter. The ultimate purpose of this study was to increase the overall achievement gains of my students who were receiving grades below a 69% in my middle school mathematics class.

### Research Questions

This action research project is grounded in three research questions. The procedures to address these questions are provided in this chapter with chapter four providing an analysis, as well as my reflections on the outcome of each question. The questions guiding this study were:

1. What changes occur in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts are made over a six-week period?
2. How can I promote parental involvement hence?
3. What can I do to educate parents on how to become more effectively involved in their children's education?



### Subjects

Participants in this study included ten parents whose children were currently receiving grades below a 69% in seventh grade mathematics and who had not contacted me after the first nine weeks of the semester. The students in the study were from an urban middle school in Central Florida. The school is a Title One school (low-income students), housing 983 students. The population demographics in 2010-2011 school years were 49% Black, 41% Hispanic, 4% White, and 4% Asian/Pacific Islander with the remaining 2% multicultural. The population by grade level includes 315 sixth graders, 366 seventh graders, and 302 eighth graders. Since only 10 students in my mathematics class were receiving grade below 69% and their parents had not contacted me in the first nine weeks, these 10 seventh grade student/parent pairs were invited to participate in a study to analyze students' achievement in mathematics as it relates to parental involvement. The 10 seventh grade students were selected to participate based on their performance in my class that included class participation, test scores, quizzes, and the rate of homework completion. Those 10 students were failing my class, and I believed one of the reasons was due to a lack of parental involvement. This group of 10 students was closely proportionate according to the school population's ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

### Variables

This study investigated the relationship between, teacher-parent communication and students' mathematical achievement, as measured by their test and quiz scores.

### Setting

The study was conducted in the researchers own classroom. The dimension of the classroom was approximately 10 ft. x 12 ft. The students were seated in groups of four as usual

working collaboratively with other students. During whole group instruction however, they were facing the teacher and an interactive write board.

Results from parental contacts were recorded using a form provided in Table 1 for the first two weeks of the study. Then in weeks three and four, the form provided in Table 2 was used to record information regarding e-mail contact. In addition to the information in Table 2, copies of the e-mail sent to parents were kept to allow for further analysis. All e-mail communications were printed and then coded and any parental identifying information was removed.

**Table 1 Recording log of parental contact**

Phone call/week 1&2					
Students #	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
1					
2					

**Table 2 Parental contact log for e-mail and student planner**

Students	Date	Notes in planner						
		Email/notes week 3& 4			week 5 & 6			
		Grade	Reason for emailing	Parent feedback	Grade	Reason for notes	Parent feedback	
1								
2								
3								
4								

### Procedure

At the beginning of the school year, a University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted to get approval to conduct the study. Appendix A contains a copy of the approved IRB letter. The principal of the middle school provided his (her) support for the project. This action research study was a reflection upon enriching my standard practice of contacting parents and was within my daily roles and responsibilities as a teacher. The results of the findings for this study have been shared with the school, where the principal could use the information as he/she deemed appropriate to make future decisions concerning parental involvement in the school.

The week prior to the study starting, the approved IRB consent letter was sent home with the ten seventh grade students for signed permission to be included as part of my action research study. The letter explained the purpose of the study and data collection procedures. See Appendix B for a copy of the IRB consent letter). To ensure students understood the importance of the information going home, all envelopes were sealed with a specific note printed on it: **“To the parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, High Priority, time sensitive material enclosed”**. Copies of the signed parent Informed Consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet in my classroom.

The purpose of the study was discussed with the students, as well as their parents over both the consent letter and during the first phone call; Parents were allowed to withdraw themselves and their child from the study at any time. Since participating and non-participating students had the same assignments and were graded the same, there was no sharing of the results of this study with study participants.

To ensure that all 10 parents received the consent form, another copy of the consent form was sent home via mail. All 10 parents agreed to participate in the action research study during the first semester of the 2010/2011 school year. All activities for the students took place during the normal class period October 25 through January 15. Parental phone calls or other ways of communicating occurred either before or after school or during times when I was not providing direct instruction to students. The following timeline shows what occurred each week of the parental contact action-research study.

#### Phone Calls to Parents

During weeks one and two, I provided four calls home to each parent – two calls per week. For each phone call, I provided important information of how to become more involved and how they might be interested in connecting with me in the classroom. I started by suggesting to the parents how they can show interest by communicating with their children about school and discussing how well their child is doing in school. I encouraged the parents to ask at least two questions to their children each night when they arrived home. For example, *How was your day? What did you learn today? Can I help you with your homework?* I also mentioned to the parents how they can set high expectation for their children during one of the phone calls each week. In addition, I invited them to participate at school in any upcoming school activity, like PTSA meetings, open house, parent night, parent-teacher conferences, and also to communicate with the teacher via email or phone as often as possible. I also informed the parents about how long I have been teaching and that I am bilingual. The Creole speaking parents were more than happy they could communicate with me in their home language. Finally, I discussed during the second of the four phone calls having a reward system and a consequence at home and some ideas to

consider. In the third and fourth phone calls, I shared a couple of ideas with parents on how they might be consistent in rewarding their child for a job well done and having consequences when they make poor choices. In the final phone call, I confirmed their current e-mail address and shared that I would be providing further contact via e-mail and then would in two weeks start writing in their child's planner. Again I reiterated that they were more than welcome to also give me a call. Throughout each phone call, I listened to any of the parents' concerns regarding their child and my class. During each phone call I made a log of topics discussed and at the conclusion of each call I wrote a paragraph summary of the conversation.

#### E-mail Contact with Parents

During weeks three and four I sent an e-mail twice a week telling the parents about their child's progress. In the e-mails, I encouraged the parents to check their child's progress as often as possible. I explained how to check their child's progress by going to parent access site weekly or even daily if time permitted. For those parents who did not have internet access, I welcomed them to come to my class any time so we could check their child's progress together or to continue with a phone call, or I could send a weekly progress report to the parents.

#### Notes Home with Students

In weeks five and six, I wrote comments at least twice a week in the students' planners to keep in touch with parents, informing them about their child's progress. Each time I wrote in the planner one comment about their behavior and another about academic performance. I ensured that at least one of the two comments were positive and when possible made both comments positive.

### Teacher Reflection

Beyond the contact with parents, I continued to reflect upon my own teaching and how to best increase parent communication, involvement and enrichment in my classroom. I continued to monitor students' progress weekly paying close attention to details on how they behaved in class, the rate of homework returned, and their quizzes and test scores. I kept copies of notes about our communication and coded those records with an identification number to protect subject identity.

After collecting data from the targeted 10 parents over six weeks and while monitoring student's progress, I analyzed the extent of family involvement, how often they participated and analyzed the content of messages (via each method and holistically) when contacted by the teacher. In addition to analyzing the content of the parental contacts, I also compared the achievement levels of the students with the level of parental involvement. I ended with a reflective summary of lessons learned as well as strategies for next semester to both increase parental involvement and student achievement.

The overall data were analyzed using a content analysis approach. The data gathered were coded into discernable themes. Johnson and LaMontagne (1993) suggest that content analysis, "reduces communication into discrete categories according to a set of predetermined rules"(1993). Content analyses of the parent conversations, e-mails and responses to student notes were analyzed for each parent and across parents. The responses were then bracketed as categories in relation to the research questions. Answers unrelated to the questions were also noted. The categories were then defined to delineate the focus of the responses. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the data analyzed in the research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS**

This action research study allowed me to analyze my current practices in working with parents of students currently failing my course, whose parent had not made any contact with me in the first nine weeks. For my study, I examined different ways to increase parent-teacher communication. To determine if there were any impacts from my communication, I analyzed students' grade and the frequency of parent responses.

The first question focused on what changes occurred in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts are made over a six-week period? (see table 3) Table 3 shows a comparison of students' grade from the first marking period to the second marking period. Overall from various forms of parental contact, I had five students whose overall scores increased. However four students' grades went down after my series of parental contact, and one student's grade remained the same. The overall students' averages, however slightly increased.



**Table 3: comparison of first and second nine weeks**

Students	First 9 weeks			Second 9 weeks		
	Average		Average Grade (%)	Average		Average Grade Weeks (%)
	homework completion	Test average		homework completion	Test average	
1	82	32	65	71	65	80
2	40	50	64	38	63	70
3	57	60	66	0	55	55
4	72	30	60	0	75	71
5	52	55	67	0	55	61
6	62	50	59	0	70	62
7	46	50	60	50	60	64
8	72	55	68	33	80	68
9	37	50	61	68	65	60
10	54	62	67	50	50	62
Average	57.4	49.4	63.7	31	63.8	65.3

Table 3 appears to show no direct relationship between homework completion and test scores. At least four students' homework completion's grade went down while both their test scores and their average grades went up. However, it is important to note that homework in this action-research study only accounted for 10% of the students' grades. If I take into account everything else that consist of the students' overall grades (quizzes, bell work, and class assignments), I did see students' overall grades increase in the final marking period. For instance student 1 was actively engaged in class activities; therefore, her class assignment weight was higher than before.

On the other hand, for student 3 and 10 there was a decrease in everything from the first 9 weeks to the second 9 weeks. Homework completion, test averages, and overall average scores, all went down. These two students in my opinion lacked determination and motivation to complete class work and participate actively in class discussions. Overall there was a lack of the willingness for either of these two students to try to improve their averages. However, student 7 did show an improvement in all three components of the final grade, but it was average. The student did not, however, show much interest in getting class work completed.

Overall, homework completion went down from the first 9 weeks to the second 9 weeks. Students 3, 4, 5, and 6 did not turn in homework at all during the second marking period, despite my parent-teacher communications. That would explain why the average homework completion went down. From the data given in the table, homework cannot be used as a reason why the students' grades decreased as it was just a small part of the average grade. However, I still believe students need to practice their mathematics skills at home to succeed.

Table 3 show a comparison of students' grade from the first marking period to the second marking period. Overall from various forms of parental contact, I had five students whose overall scores increased. However four students' grades went down after my series of parental contact, and one student's grade remained the same. The overall students' averages, however slightly increased.

Student 1's grade increased from 65% to 80% which is a tremendous improvement. From the day I spoke to Mom, this student began improving and has continued in both academic and behavior. Mom was very helpful and always showed concern every time I called. From the increase in grades and her attitude in the classroom, I perceived that mom had an influence over her child's academic performance. Student 2 also increased her grade from a 64% to a 70%. However, for this parent whenever I called, mom sounded as if she did not want to be bothered. Student 3 decreased from a 66% to a 55%; I did not get much support from this parent. Mom agreed to participate at first, but she explained that she was uncertain how to get her child motivated to do his schoolwork. She claimed that there was no need to get involved because she may move. However, I still have the student in my class and he has not tried to get his work done in class or turn in any homework. We spoke twice during the data collection, after that she never answered my calls, or emailed me back.

Student 4 increased from 60% to 71%. Mom was somewhat helpful, she listened to me, and said ok she would ensure that the student got her homework done, but there was little change in behavior by the student. Student 5 slightly decreased from a high D to a lower D. Both mom and dad showed interest and were happy that I opened the communication door, because they

said they felt that the student needed a little push. However, I did not notice any change in the student at all, behavior wise or academically. Student 6 was a challenge, I spoke to dad several times, and each time he would say the same thing, “Ok it’s a good thing, but I don’t live with my daughter and I don’t have mom’s phone number”. The student’s grade increased from a 59% to a 62%, but this student is capable of doing even better. The student has been up and down on her tests and quizzes. Student 7 increased from 60% to 64%. His story was similar to many of my other students where mom listened and said okay, but with very little feedback. This parent never called again and the student showed no willingness to do any work in class. Student 8 did not change. I had some difficulty contacting the parent, for their phone got disconnected. I did not receive any feedback from my emails. Student 9 was a whole different story. Mom tried her best to get involved, she would call me to find out how the student was doing, however, not only was the student not at grade level, he had difficulty focusing in class. His grade dropped slightly from a 61% to a 60%. The parents of student 10 both showed interest, but I could tell there was a communication problem between the child and the parents. The parent wanted the best for their child, and they’ve been trying to get involved. However, my reflection was that their increased involvement may be too late, mainly due to language barriers, for this student does not listen to his parents. His grade decreased from a 67% to a 62%. Three of the parents contacted were bilingual, students 4, 9, and 10. They had the opportunity to explain to me in their native language the difficulties they been having motivating their child to make the right choice in school. The impact of being able to converse with parents in their native language was not a component of this study but is a factor to consider in my future parental contact.

### Promoting Parental Involvement

How can I promote parental involvement?

I tried to promote parental involvement by calling parents, emailing them, sending notes, and inviting them to come for parent-teacher conference; but most seemed to have difficulty initiating a return phone call, responding to my emails or coming to the school for parent night or parent-teacher conferences. The communication was not a two way street but was simply my reaching out to them. Except for one parent, I always initiated the calls and the emails. The feedback I received was not in concert with my plan on promoting parental involvement. However, from my communication some students did try harder and some students had measurable success.

### Phone Calls

During my phone calls, (see Appendix C), I promoted parental involvement by telling parents how to get involved, their child's responsibilities, upcoming school activities, how to set high expectations, and how to discuss an upcoming quiz or test with their child. I advised parents on how to communicate with their children, to have a reward system and consequences when rules are broken. On my last call, I confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent with their child. I encouraged parents to check their child's planner and homework for completion. Still students came to school without their homework. I also encouraged parents to check their child's progress report often online through the parent access website provided, but most said they did not have access to do so. I also invited parents to come to my class to show them how, but no one ever showed up to take advantage of this option. A few parents told me they did not have a car, and explained that it is difficult for them to take a bus to come to the

school for they have younger sibling to take care of after schools. Others said they could not come because of the work schedule.

#### Notes and E-mails

Appendix D provides a list of detailed explanations of my emails. In those emails, I discussed student grades and improvement, upcoming progress reports, class assignments and homework. Appendix D shows the students' test scores, progress report grades, the reason for my emails and the feedback received from parents. Those parents, who did not have email, received an additional phone call. Appendix E shows details of the notes I sent home. I let parents know about academic improvement and their child's conduct. To those parents who did not have access to a progress book (our online progress report system), I sent a progress report home and a note telling parents about opportunities to make up low tests or quiz scores. Overall, because of the lack of involvement and responses, I could say that my effort for some students was futile but for a few students it did seem to make an impact.

#### Educate Parents

What can I do to educate parents on how to become more effectively involved in their child's education?

I tried different ways to educate parents on the effectiveness of parental involvement in their child's education. Through my phone calls, email, and notes, I encouraged parents to check their child's progress frequently and to discuss their mathematics scores without using negative criticism. I encouraged parents to give positive feedback and to have structure, rewards and consequences at home. I encouraged parents to check their child's planner frequently, and to help

them with homework if they can without giving answers and to check the homework for completeness. I also encouraged parents to set high expectation and to communicate with me often. Nevertheless, some parents still were not engaged or willing to open the communication lines. The table in appendix D shows that the emails worked for a few parents, but for most of the parents contacted they did not have e-mail. The notes in the planner (see Appendix E) were not that efficient either, because I did not receive any feedback from parents. Even parents who talked to me on the phone did not communicate through the planner.

In the future, I think the phones call would produce better outcomes although it was easier to send an email. As a mathematics teacher, setting time aside to call parents is time consuming. If the message that needs to go home is uniform, one e-mail could go home to all parents using a fraction of the time it takes to call individual parent. However, with the phone calls I received instant feedback from parents. With e-mails and notes in the planner, parents did not reply. Furthermore, students can easily forget to turn in the notes to their parents, or parents may be too busy to check their e-mail. Moreover, not every parent had internet access or an e-mail account. To facilitate the parent-teacher communication, which is very important, from my action-research project it appears a phone call is the most reliable form of communication at least for the students in my classroom with such diverse economic and cultural backgrounds.

### Validity

The validation of the data were verified through a cross examination of all three methods of collecting the information. Table 4 shows a summary of the feedback received from parents across all the three methods used to initiate parent-teacher communication.

**Table 4: comparison of three methods of collecting data**

<b>Phone calls</b>	<b>Emails</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Parents listen to me, said ok some ask questions but most did not. All but one never called me. During the calls, some students kind of try to make the effort to get their work done, but some did not	Only one parent replied to my emails. Students' attitude and willingness to learn did not change that much except for one.	I never received any feedback from parents whenever I sent the notes home.

### **Interpretation**

The lack of responses implies that parental involvement was insufficient across all three methods of collecting the data because there wasn't enough parental feedback. The parents of the students who show an increase were more involved than the others. From my point of view there is more than just parental involvement to the story. The parent's background, education, and the age of the student when the parents start to get involved play a major role.



### Reliability

The data provided in the Appendices D, E and F reflect the notes I gathered throughout the action research project. A colleague compared 25% of my notes to the final tables, and found the data to be 100% accurate. Since this was an action research study, there is not sufficient enough evidence as to whether the methods of parental contact influenced their children in the choices pertaining to education as no follow-up measures to compare parent discussions to student behavior in mathematics were included.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Previous researchers found a direct correlation between parental involvement in education and student academic achievement. Parental involvement in the form of high parental expectations, parent-teacher communication, homework assistant at home have all proven to be effective in promoting academic achievement among students in previous studies (Bailey, 2006; Phillipson, 2009; Sirvani, 2007). However, in my action research, I was surprised with what I found regarding the willingness of parents to be engaged in ongoing communication with their child's teacher.

### Contributing Factors to Parenting Involvement

According to previous research studies, parental involvement is a contributing factor to students' mathematical academic achievement (Crosnoe, 2009; Fan & Williams, 2010; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Phillipson, 2009; Sirvani, 2007; Yan & Lin, 2005). From my action research, I found that there are other contributing factors to the uniqueness of parental involvement in education. I decided to compartmentalize those factors into parenting background, parent interactions with his or her child, and the student's age when the parent starts becoming involved. A parent's background seemed to play a major role in the involvement process. Different parents have different styles. Students who come from parents whose background may not value education may have limited respect for adults, may not follow rules and procedures, hence, they misbehave in school, or refuse to do their homework. Some of the students involved in my study would say "my Mom and Dad do not care if you call them". In such a situation, as a teacher, I feel the parent's value of education may limit their involvement

and the achievement of their child. My hope in my contacting parents was to educate them on the importance of parental involvement in their child academic achievement and how they can get involved. Despite my intentions, I found communication to go only from teacher to parent but not back to the teacher.

#### Parent's Expectations

According to Boethel (2003), there is considerable variation on the level of involvement of parents and this variation is closely correlated to the socio-economic position and ethnic background of the parent. However, I found out that, parent's level of education is preponderant in the process. When parents are educated, they might have a different view of education; their philosophy about education could influence their interaction with their child, hence influence the child's aspiration and how the child perceives education and pursues achievement. Through my action research project, I discovered that parental expectations for some of my students were low. Many parents were unable to help their children with homework or even check the homework for completeness. I found out that some students would lie to their parents about having homework, until I called about the missing assignments. Several of the students in the study showed no interest in learning, which may be connected to the fact that some parents shared they had limited experience with the education system.

Phillipson (2009) in his study argued that parent expectations played a major role in student academic achievement. Through my action research project, I found this same concept to be true. Although some parents strive to provide their kids with the best possible education, the kids also have a mind of their own, specifically with middle school age students. Fan and Williams (2010) stipulated that teacher-parent communication creates criticisms and

punishments from parents, which in turn can diminish a student's confidence; this could be true for some of my students. Many of the parents I communicated to were doing everything they could but in vain, because the students in this age group tend to rebel. For that reason, parental involvement must be started at the very beginning of elementary school. A child is like a tree, if one wants a tree to grow straight and healthy, one should water the tree and shape it from the very beginning. Otherwise, once the tree grows, it is likely impossible to reshape it. I found out that those parents I was working with were not typically involved in their children's education. I had to wonder if trying to start their involvement in middle school might be too late. I had parents asking me to please help them because their child would not listen. I believe that children need parent support from an early age and trying to increase the level of involvement at middle school may or may not work as I noted in my attempts in this study.

#### Students' Responsibility

Parental involvement is one thing, students' accountability and responsibility is another. As a teacher, I believe students must be held accountable for their own learning. As previously noted in the literature review, some parents may have two jobs, multiple children or even a fear of education (Brandon, Higgins, Pierce, Tandy, & Sileo, 2010) therefore they do not have the time or maybe even the desire to get involved in their child's education. Some parents may not have enough education to understand the importance of getting involved. Some parents do not know how to get involved mainly because middle schools are large and complex, which make it difficult for parents to become effectively involved (Hill & Tyson, 2009). I had parents who really tried to get involved, but because of language barriers, their ability to communicate with the school or their child in English was limited. I had the opportunity to work with three of

those parents and overcome the language barrier, for I speak their home language (Creole). I did help these parents out by educating them on how to get involved and how to check progress reports online. However, my ability to speak their language was not enough because these parents could not help with homework or have ongoing communication with all teachers at the school due to a language barrier. Being able to connect with families of other languages is an issue that needs further attention at all grade levels.

#### Homework Help at Home

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship of academic achievement and homework completion on middle school students in mathematics when parental and teacher communication increased. Sirvani (2007) noted that parents who monitored student's homework at least twice a week contributed to improved student academic achievement. I found out that parent and teacher communication did not increase the rate of homework completion for some of my students. Parents would tell me they did not know that their child had homework until I called. I believe that homework completion played a role in helping the five students who showed improvement in their grades. Homework is very important to excel in mathematics; practice makes perfect when it comes to mathematics. I do not give homework for the sake of doing it; it is a way to reinforce the concept learned in class. I believe my various ways of communicating for those 5 students did have some impact on homework completion. The other 5 students may have issues beyond just homework that needs further support beyond just my calling home.

### Teacher-Parent Communication

To the research question, what changes occur in students' test scores and overall grades when a variety of parental contacts are made over a six- week period? Research shows, when parental involvement increases, a more trusting and positive relationships results between teachers and parents (Bauch, 1994; Watkins, 2001). I could say that parental contact did help some students improve their grade, but it should be a two-way street for the process to be effective. With the lack of parental feedback, I concluded that for at least five of the students my communication was not enough. Further research would be needed to determine if for the 5 students that changes occurred if it was directly or indirectly related to my increased parental contact.

To the research question, how can I promote parental involvement hence, increase students test scores in my class? I can say that everything I did to promote parental involvement should have made an impact but just like any intervention it can only go so far if either the parent or student is not motivated to see a change occur. Some of the parents I worked with did try, but all communication only came from me to the parents and I did not have any parents contact me even once after my six weeks of reaching out to them. Therefore, further ways to connect parents should be investigated with a special focus on diverse parents from low socioeconomic status.

As for the research question, what can I do to educate parents on how to effectively involve in their children education? The teacher cannot do this alone. School administrators and other support personnel such as counselors and social workers need to be a part of the team. Administrators usually hold teachers responsible for students' failure, yet without some support

from parents and the rest of the community a teacher can only reach so far. Administrators should ask for evidence of parental contact, but know that parental contact alone will not be enough to solve the problem. To ensure the effectiveness of parental involvement, I believe that the school district and school administration should shift the focus from holding teachers accountable to providing school based educational sessions that educate parents about parental involvement.

### Conclusion

Being asked to teach students who are at the lowest academic levels in mathematics can create behavior problems and proved challenges to teachers they should not have to face alone. Parent involvement can help alleviate the problem, hence improving the teacher's endeavor in trying to reach the student's full potential. Even though teachers need to make parental contact, it does not matter who initiates the call, both parent and teacher need to be on the same page for the effort to be successful. As President Obama phrased it, we can have the best school and the best teacher, but parents must also fulfill their responsibility for the joint effort to be successful. I understand that it may not be easy for some parents. Not only it may be difficult for parents to become effectively involved due to the complexity of middle school, it may also be difficult for teachers to develop and maintain a productive relationship with the parent of each student due to the fact that they have a large number of students (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Nonetheless the importance of successfully educating each and every child does take a village that must include teachers and parents as a team.

The results of this study however, may have some shortcoming attached to it. The fact that the students were my students could limit the generalizability of the findings to all

classrooms. Furthermore, there is not enough evidence to conclude that those parents were not involved in their child's education. Further research will be needed to determine whether teacher-parent communication really affect student academic achievement. However, the findings were consistent with those of Hill and Tyson (2009) and those of Ho (2006). It would be important to use this result as groundwork for future study and develop strategies that could help parents overcome the barriers preventing them from fully involve in their child's education.



**APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Viana Pierre Gilles

Date: September 27, 2010

Dear Researcher:

On 9/27/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: Increasing Parental Involvement Increases Student Academic Achievement  
Investigator: Viana Pierre Gilles  
IRB Number: SBE-10-07124  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB.

When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 09/27/2010 04:00:38 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

IRB Coordinator

## **APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT**

Dear Parents

Title of Project: *Increasing Parental Involvement Increases Student Academic Achievement*

Principal Investigator: Viana Pierre Gilles

Faculty supervisor: Lisa Dieker

[ldieker@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:ldieker@mail.ucf.edu)

Phone: 407-823-3885

4000 Central Florida Blvd

Orlando, FL 32816

You and your child are being invited to take part in an action research study. Whether you and your child take part, is up to you. As a part of my master's degree program at the University of Central Florida, I am conducting an action research project to improve my teaching and your students learning in mathematics. The title of my study is *Increasing Parental Involvement Increases Student Academic Achievement*, the purpose of which is to examine how different ways of communicating with parents can be used to increase student grades.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you and your child as participants in this study. You and child are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the study at any time without consequence. Your participation or non-participation in this study will not impact your child's grade.

As a participant, you will be asked to communicate with me via phone, notes, planner or e-mail about your child's performance one to two times a week over the second 9 weeks of the semester. I will keep copies of notes about our communication but those records will be coded with an identification number and no names will be listed. Only I and my advisor will have access to the notes removing any identifiers. The notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed after the completion of my master's degree. Your identity will be kept confidential and will not be revealed in any manuscript, project report or data analysis.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at xx

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

Please keep one copy and sign and a return a copy to me by 11/03/10:

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C: WEEKS 1 AND 2 PARENT CONTACT**

**Table 5: Weeks 1 and 2 Phone Calls to Parents**

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
1	65	11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Mom showed interest and agreed to get involved any way she could.
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	60%	I discussed the next quiz , how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Parent agreed to make sure that the student studied and completed homework. Listened to me and agreed.
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	Mom gave me her e-mail address
		11/19	lesson 4-5thru 4-10	60	I left message about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent	

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
2	64	11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Mom showed interest to participate, and stated that she did not have time to participate in school activities.
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	60	I discussed the next quiz , how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Mom was not helpful with behavior concern.
		11/17/10		50	I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	Mom gave me her email address
		11/19	lesson 4-5thru 4-10		I left messages about the next chapter test confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent	



Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
3	66	11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Mom showed interest to participate and stated that the project could be helpful because the student shows no interest in school
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	60	I discussed the next quiz , how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Mom stated that there was a possibility the student would go back to father in NY
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	
4	60	11/19	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10	50	I left message about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent.	Mom gave me her e-mail address
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement.	Mom showed interest to participate and thanked me for helping out.

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
5	67	11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	70	I discussed the next quiz, how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations.	Mom stated she will make sure the student gets the homework done.
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	
		11/19	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10	50	I left messages about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent	
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement.	Dad showed interest and agreed the student needed to be challenge academically
5	67	11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	80	I discussed the next quiz, how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations.	Listened and agreed

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences.	
		11/19	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10	50	I left messages about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent.	Mom sent me her e-mail address
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement.	No answer, left message.
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	50	I discussed the next quiz, how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations.	Dad stated he will speak to mom; he does not live with child.
6	59	11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
7	60	11/19	lesson 4-5thru 4-10	50	I discussed the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent.	Dad asked for my school e-mail address so he could keep in contact with me
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Mom listened and agreed.
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz		I discussed the next quiz , how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Busy, with other children, no time to come to school.
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	
		11/19	lesson 4-5thru 4-10	50	I left messages about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent	Mom gave me her e-mail
8	68	11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Left message on answering machine.

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	100	I discussed the next quiz, how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations.	Left message on answering machine
		11/17/10	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10	50	I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward systems, and consequences	
		11/19			I left message about the next chapter test handwritten note sent with student	Mom sent me her e-mail address
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement	Mom was encouraged by my phone call and thanked me. She stated she would support me at home
9	61	11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	50	I discussed the next quiz , how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Mom listened and agreed with me

Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
10		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward system, and consequences.	Mom agreed
		11/19	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10	50	I left messages about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent.	No email
		11/05/10			Promote parental involvement.	Mom listened to everything I said but did not ask any question
		11/12/10	Lessons 4-1&4-2 quiz	60	I discussed the next quiz, how to get involved, upcoming school activities, and setting high expectations	Both parents expressed they are concerned about their child, but due to work hours are unable to meet at school
		11/17/10			I discussed how to communicate with their child, reward system, and consequences	

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Students	Average Grade for first 9 weeks (%)	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for calling	Parent feedback
		11/19	lesson 4-5 thru 4-10 quiz	60	I left message about the next chapter test, confirmed their current e-mail address and how to be consistent	No email

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**APPENDIX D: WEEKS 4 AND 5 E-MAILS TO PARENT**



**Table 6: Weeks 3 and 4 e-mails to parents**

Students					
	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for emailing	Parent feedback
1	12/2	Ch 4 test	70	No email/called and left message	Mom called back and gave me the e-mail address
	12/6	PR grade	71	Progress report	None
	12/8			Double checked if parent received progress report	
2	12/2	Ch 4 test	75	Informed parent about grade and improvement	None
	12/6	PR grade	70	Progress report	None
	12/8			Class assignment, homework, and improvement	Mom e-mailed back stating “he better be passing”
3	12/2	Ch 4 test	55	Left message on the answering machine	None
	12/6	PR grade		Failing	No reply
	12/8		59	Emailed about grades still failing	No reply

Students

	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for emailing	Parent feedback
4	12/2	Ch 4 test	90	The parent had no e-mail, called and spoke to Mom about grade	Mom listened and stated she will make sure the student gets her work done
	12/6	PR grade	72		Mom agreed
	12/8			Informed mom about the progress report and asked her to discuss it with the student	
5	12/2	Ch 4 test	60	Informed mom about test and academic improvements	No reply
	12/6	PR grade	55	Informed mom about the progress report and asked her to discuss it with the student	Mom stated she is trying but the student does not listen. Mom inquired as to the possibility of retaining him in 7 <sup>th</sup> grade
	12/8				
6	12/2	Ch 4 test	90	Spoke to Dad about the improvement on chapter 4 test	Dad asked me for my email instead of giving me his and never emailed me
	12/6	PR grade	63	Informed mom about the progress report and asked to discuss it with the student	
	12/8				

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Students

	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for emailing	Parent feedback
7	12/2	Ch 4 test	58	No email, spoke to mom about test and improvements	Mom listened and agreed, but did not asked any question
	12/6	PR grade	60	Informed mom about the PR & to discuss it with the student	
	12/8				
8	12/2	Ch 4 test	80	Informed mom about test and academic improvements	No reply
	12/6	PR grade	65	Informed mom about the progress report and to discuss the grade with the student	
	12/8				
	12/1			No email, spoke to mom about test and improvements	
9	12/2	Ch 4 test	65		Mom called, concerned about grades
	12/6				
	12/8	PR grade	52	Informed mom about the PR & to discuss it with the student	

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Students

	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for emailing	Parent feedback
	12/2	Ch 4 test	50	No e-mail, spoke to mom about test and academic improvements	Mom said whenever she asked the student if he had homework, he said no
10	12/6	PR grade	63	Informed mom about the progress report and to discuss it with the student	

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**APPENDIX E: WEEKS 5 AND 6 STUDENT PLANNER NOTES TO PARENTS**

**Table 7: Weeks 5 and 6 Notes in Planner to Parents**

Students	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for notes	Parent feedback
1	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	100	Improvement and conduct Academic improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7				
	1/10			Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	60	Informed parents about how the student is progressing	
2	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	80	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
3	1/5			Informed parents about how the student is progressing	No parental feedback
	1/7	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	missing	Improvement and conduct Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
				Informed parents about how the student is progressing	

Students	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for notes	Parent feedback
4	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	85	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	60	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
	1/5			Informed parents about how the student is progressing	
5	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	100	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
				Informed parents about how the student is progressing	

Students	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for notes	Parent feedback
6	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	65	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	Mom appreciated that I called and promised to make sure that the student takes responsibility
	1/24		Informed parents about how the student is progressing		
7	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	60	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	Informed parents about how the student is progressing
				Informed parents about how the student is progressing	



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Students	Date	Test/quiz	Grade	Reason for notes	Parent feedback
8	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	missing	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	missing	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
	1/5			Informed parents about how the student is progressing	
9	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	70	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	Benchmark MA.7A1.1 post test	50	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
	1/5			Informed parents about how the student is progressing	
10	1/5	lesson5-1 thru 5-4	50	Improvement and conduct	No parental feedback
	1/7			Academic improvement and conduct	
	1/10				
	1/13	MA.7A1.1 post test	missing	Sent progress report home and sent notes to advise the parent about opportunity to raise lower grades	
	1/5			Informed parents about how the student is progressing	

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