

International Migrants, Family Literacy and Pact

A Closer Look at a Family Literacy and PACT

Keno Nagasa

Colorado Christian University

USA

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the components of a family literacy program that brought international migrants into Primary Classrooms in the Rocky Mountain Region in the US. The literacy program included four components: 1) Children's Education of direct child instruction of literacy and language skills; 2) Adult Education of parent instruction of English as Second Language (ESL); 3) Parent Time of parent education and support group; and 4) Parent and Child Together Time (PACTT), where the parents get to be an interactive part of their child's classroom with the teacher present. PACTT is a unique opportunity in facilitating cultural integration and parental engagement, while providing participants opportunity to observe first-hand the reality of education in the United States as well as being active ELLs. Drawing on multiple social and educational theories and research, data from interviews, observation, and focus group yielded data that contributes a more inclusive discourse and new knowledge to the educational community regarding international migrants and their dreams and hopes for the success of their children.

Key Words: family literacy, PACT, international migrants, primary school, student success

Introduction

“Literacy arouses hopes, not only in society as a whole but also in the individual who is striving for fulfillment, happiness and personal benefit by learning how to read and write. Literacy... means far more than learning how to read and write... The aim is to transmit... knowledge and promote social participation.”

- UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany

The involvement of parents in their children's education and literacy development is a strong predictor of students' success in school (American Federation of Teachers [AFT] & Reading Rockets, 2005; Delgado-Gaitán, 2004; Hamilton, Roach, & Riley, 2003). Yet, parental involvement is often a difficult goal to achieve (Ahad, Aliyyah & Meghan Benton, 2018; Ortiz, 2004; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report, 2010; Park, Marki, & Margie McHugh, 2014). The issue of parental encounters with their child's schools become even unrealistic and often counter-productive when schools take normalized, traditional approaches instead of culturally and linguistically responsive creative approaches (Samway & McKeon, 2007; Scott, 2004; Williams, 2009). The authors reveal that subscribing to the normalized/traditional lens is not necessarily wrong. However, challenges surface when

families' actions, which are not aligned with the normalized lens, are viewed in a negative, unproductive way.

Differences between the languages, cultures, and expectations of international migrants and local schools are often incongruent, which may hinder effective communication, and prevent schools and parents from developing into successful partnerships (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004; Hamilton et al., 2003; MPI 2016 Report for content and additional sources). One possible way a School District in the Rocky Mountain Region encounters these obstacles is through Linguistically Response Approach of the Family Literacy Programs the District offers at its six of thirteen Title I schools. Four key components of the Family Literacy Program are explored in this article. The Family Literacy Program takes an innovative approach and provides appropriate tool for family involvement that can help introduce international migrants to their children's schools and classrooms, with the goal of equipping parents supporting their children's literacy development.

Literature Review

Who is a migrant?

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. The United Nations' recommendations on migration statistics define an international migrant as 'any person who changes his or her country of usual residence,' (Carling, 2015). Understood in this way, migrants are people who move under different circumstances and for a variety of reasons—including fear of persecution. Participants will be called "mothers," when indicating the gender of the role and gender of the respondents is necessary, and otherwise they are addressed as "international migrants," or "participants," as contextually needed.

Parental School Involvement and Barriers

Although international migrants bring a plethora of cultural and linguistic resources as well as a wealth of knowledge, skills, and talents with them, they often face significant barriers in the United States education systems. Despite their endeavors to engage with their children's early educational experiences, they face restricted access to many resources due to limited English proficiency and functional literacy (Park, Marki, and Margie McHugh, 2014). The authors report that parental engagement is critical for young children's early cognitive and socioemotional development, and for their participation in programs that are designed to support early learning. School efforts to engage international migrants to be full partners in programs seeking to support their young children's healthy cognitive and socioemotional development, kindergarten readiness, and future school success are imperative (Park, Marki, and Margie McHugh as well as *Mainstreaming 2.0: How the USA's Education Systems Can Boost Migrant Inclusion*). This is a holistic approach of expanding parent education, literacy, and English language programs; strengthening incentives and accountability for existing program funds; and leveraging State policy-making and capacity.

Looking at the barriers international migrants face in European education systems, Ahad, Aliyyah and Meghan Benton, (2018) summarize that children who are either migrants themselves or have immigrant parents face a number of barriers in European education systems. These can include a lack of proficiency in the language of mainstream instruction, limited or interrupted prior formal education, or patchy institutional knowledge among migrant-background students and parents about how schools and systems work in the country. The authors report that the 2015–16 European migration crisis exacerbated many of these existing challenges, bringing more than 750,000 children who need to be integrated into EU Member State education systems and considerable diversity in the types and intensity of their academic, psychosocial, and other needs.

Review of current literature reveals that international migrant students often face tougher challenges than others in achieving good education outcomes and they have unique needs because of their unique situation (Ahad & Benton, 2018). The authors highlight education and integration policy deliberations more broadly that would benefit from a focus on creating the conditions that will nurture and strengthen these capabilities in pupils, both now and for the future. Performance gaps between international migrants' children and native students are largely explained by language barriers and socioeconomic differences (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report, 2010). According to the report, migrant education policy involves complex interactions of discrete policy tools that need to be well coordinated.

Framework

Multiple social and educational theories inform this study: 1) A symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective (Blumer, 1969; 1986) wherein learning as interpretative meanings of the participants' interactions, actions, as well as their experiences in context or community. 2) Sociohistorical theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985) wherein learning is seen as social, as well as individual, with more competent or more experienced significant others supporting the learning of the skills and knowledge considered important in that particular context or community (Rogoff, 2003). This theory highlights the differences in the ways individual communities model socialization and appropriate social and learning behaviors for younger members. For instance, Clay (1993) revealed that the values ascribed to literacy, its functions and purposes, and how it is learned and taught differ considerably from one sociocultural context to the next. 3) A theory of social capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990,) "cultural disposition, aptitudes, preferences, and behaviors/practices...are sent unconsciously and internalized through family socialization processes" (Symeou, 2007, p. 474) further informs this study. Laureau, for example, explains that, "schools utilize particular linguistic structures, authority patterns, and types of curricula; children from higher social locations enter schools already familiar with these social arrangements" (1987, p. 74). Many children of international migrants and children from working class and nonmainstream homes come to school not possessing this social capital and therefore cannot access the codes of power (Delpit, 2006) that enable them to succeed at school.

Drawing on these theoretical frameworks, as well as social constructivism theory that focuses on an individual's learning that takes place because of his or her interactions in a group (Crotty, 1998), I was particularly interested in understanding how international migrant parents perceived their roles in

supporting their primary school children's learning, the learning activities and information in the program they valued, and how their understanding of the literacy programs and the way they were delivered influenced (or not) their participation in the program was the goal of this study.

Context

This study was conducted in Bobne Primary School (all names are pseudonyms), of a school district located in the Rocky Mountain Region in the US. The racially and ethnically diverse student population of the school is roughly 40%, many of whom are from international migrant backgrounds of English Language Learners (ELLs). Based on the National Center for Family Literacy Model and under the direction and support of the district languages support services, the school offers four components of family literacy project for the families of ELL students: 1) direct adult instruction of English as Second Language (ESL), 2) direct child instruction (Literacy and Language skills), 3) Parent and Child Together Time (PACTT), and 4) parent education and support group. The PACTT was a context in child's classroom in which the parents' ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor and the child's teacher(s) collaborate to provide opportunities for interacting with positive role models and providing structured situations for positive parent/child interaction.

Family Literacy Programs

The Family Literacy Program of the focus of this study is a parent/child education program designed to help parents of school-aged children become more actively involved in their children's education in a traditional elementary school setting. The approach to this is providing parents with educational instruction in reading, writing, and speaking English in the schools their children attend based on the four components for Family Literacy Program stated above. Parents help their children in their classroom weekly, and are guided to ensure they have the skills they will need to do classroom activities successfully socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

The Family Literacy Program is a unique approach to literacy focusing on parents as their child's first and most valuable teacher. Family literacy and second language literacy research reveals that the collaboration between teachers and families is the most vital one because these two parties are the ones that have one-to-one interaction with children

Method

Overture

Toline (a pseudonym), the District Spanish interpreter, was both familiar with Bobne Primary School and the District, having worked for the District as a Cultural Liaison for over a decade. She is familiar with the family literacy program and the families attending the program very well. She provided Spanish linguistic and cultural support for the study and worked with me throughout data collection and analyses at Bobne Primary School's Family Literacy Program Center, which was the research site. Although she was supporting by interpreting interviews from Spanish to English and translating transcripts of Spanish language into English as well as facilitating contact with the parents, she was not involved in the study as a participant or as a co-investigator.

My Stance

I had already worked for four years for the District in my role and I was familiar with Bobne Primary School and its Family Literacy Program. I was intentionally reflexive of self as a researcher in the coding process of reviewing notes and discovering common "themes," by taking notes to document my curiosities, biases, and doubts that I referred to during the research process. I am aware that reflexivity, which is the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the "human as instrument" is important in qualitative data collection and analysis process to enhance the quality of its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba emphasize examining what the self as the researcher brings to the field; what the self as the researcher situationally creates in the research process; and how those selves come into play in the research setting and consequently the distinctive voice the researcher brings to the research. I have embraced this interesting topic and according to my description within the paper of my voice, as well as my own lived experience as an international migrant, it is clear that I have a deep interest in the interactions of international migrant parents with local schools.

Participants

Five families participated in the study representing a total of five adults and thirteen children, a convenience sample based on inclusion criteria of six months to one-year attendance of the Family Literacy Program. All five families qualify for the District's a low-income free and reduced lunch program for their children. Two of the participants self-identified as African Immigrants and three of them as Mexicans. The children ranged from kindergarten through ninth grades and attended neighborhood primary, middle, or high schools designated as Title I schools, indicating 40% or more of the population qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Table 1 shows participant demographics, including their countries of origin, education level, number of schoolchildren, and the duration of family literacy attended to give context for the study.

Table 1

Participants of the Study

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Grades Completed	Number of School Children	Months/Years attended Family Literacy
Fatima	Kenya	3rd	4	6 months
Lydia	Ethiopia	12+1	2	1 year
Lupe	Mexico	12	2	7 months
Maria	Mexico	12	3	1 year
Rosa	Mexico		2	9 months

Design of the Study

A basic qualitative research design based on the theoretical framework discussed in the preceding section was employed to understand the perspectives of one Ethiopian mother, one Kenyan mother, and three Mexican mothers regarding their reactions, perceptions, and feelings of a Family Literacy Program at large and the PACTT component specifically as they each experienced. Learning from the participants’ learning was the goal of this study, and generalizing from the participants respective racial groups is not the primary concern. The research questions were (1) what have the international migrants experienced with PACTT. In addition (2), what situations have typically influenced their school engagement experiences with their children’s teachers?

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected based on the research questions and pertinent follow-up prompts and emerging data that arose in the interviews, classroom observations, and focus group settings. Focus group was useful to corroborate the data gained through interviews and classroom observations and to seek any emerging data. Participants were contacted three times at the school site over a period of six months to share their responses back to researcher for the purpose of verifying data and checking the data for accuracy. This process also helped to get detail insight of the subject and to validate the preceding responses (Creswell 2007), while looking for new emergent meanings. A Spanish interpreter was helpful in transcribing Spanish audio data and translating transcripts to English text for analysis. Non-Spanish speaker participants used English and the researcher asked questions when clarification of concepts were needed.

The data consisted of three audio recorded interviews, two audio-recorded focus groups, and field notes. The research situation as well as data was interpreted according to the thoughts and feelings that arose in context during the actual setting of the interviews, the focus groups, and observations. Therefore, readers should not assume an objective reality, and they are encouraged to relate to the data with their own

interpretations. Horizontalization (Creswell, 2007), which is a strategy of building on the data from the first and second research questions, data analysis going through the data, such as interview transcriptions were then used in the data analysis process.

Results

The findings in a basic qualitative research study typically involves the themes that emerged from all the data reported with illustrative quotations and possibly the data that answers the research questions. It was necessary that the information gathered in this study be reflective of the participants' voices. The theme sections include a general description, a summary of the relevant comments, and examples of participants' comments and essences.

The analysis of the data revealed the following five significant quotes that yielded three major themes that describe the responses: 1) "I appreciate the open door policy the school offered me and the readiness and willingness of the teachers as well as the administrators to closely work with me. This is new experience for me." Lupe; 2) "The privilege of parents and teachers deserving respect has been taken away here in the United States of America. No consequences that is strong enough to stop this. Back home country, in Mexico, teachers are regarded as "parents" and are very much respected by young kids and adults." Maria; 3) "With the skills and knowledge I gained from the ESL and PACTT programs, I gave a lot of support for my children and it improved my literacy skills. I believe the program is very helpful for most parents." Fatima; 4) "Given its importance and benefit, enough time was not given for both ESL and PACTT sessions." Lydia; 5) "I understand that my children live in two cultures. However, they need to keep their heritage culture while being open to other cultures as well." Rosa.

The analysis of the quotes and the data revealed the following three major themes that describe the responses: 1) Bring more intention to the classroom to identify and to address individual needs while fostering communication, respect, and understanding in the diverse classroom; 2) Model skills and knowledge for parents so that they can support their children's education in school and beyond; 3) Give more time for ESL and PACTT sessions so that participating parents will get more chance to practice with their children during PACT and to learn from their teachers and classmates, as well as hone their speaking skills in ESL classes.

This study was not a program evaluation, but I feel it is important that these significant themes give voice to these concerns as expressed by participants. The themes included a summary of the relevant comments, quotes, and examples of participants' essence of the experience around their perceptions of the subject. Additionally, the themes highlighted the participants' expectations, values, and goals for their children's learning and school engagement. Furthermore, the themes shade light on the parents' perceptions of their children's behavior and attitudes, as well as teacher's management of the classroom.

Brining More Intention to the Classroom to Identify and Address Individual Needs

Bring more intention to the classroom to identify and address individual needs while fostering communication, respect, and understanding in the diverse classroom.

Central to this theme were comments regarding why students are not generally respectful to their teachers and parents as well as to one another. Some participants voiced concerns about lack of

respect and appropriate mannerisms from students. The participants unanimously commented that students should be respectful to teachers, parents and their fellow students and to the school community in general. Regarding respect, a parent's statement stood out in the following quote:

I have experienced children give more respect to teachers and parents in Mexico than in the United States. A teacher is regarded as the other "parent" in Mexico. This privilege of parents and teachers has been taken away here in the United States. No consequences that is strong enough to stop children disrespecting parents and teachers as well as others in schools and outside.

Strategies a Mexican parent mentioned to help her children with behavioral and social issues begins with teaching them to respect themselves first and then to respect others. This strategy is supported by a quote from an Ethiopian parent in Oromo language ("Afan Oromo") "*marcuma ulfinaa abbaatu of-jala baata,*" which basically means that one should first respect oneself or model respect so that others will respect. The participants' intention was that even though they live in the United States, it is important for them to keep their culture of respect and continue with a portion of who they are and the legacy of respecting oneself and all others has to stay with them. One participant pointed out that she intentionally teaches her children to behave and to respect all others. Another parent mentioned that, "*In general, teachers are doing a great job, but the suggestion I have is that there should be respect among students, teachers and parents as well as among students themselves.*" All of the participants highlighted the word "respect" and it often came up throughout the interviews and the focus groups. The related comment given by yet another participant was that the school community should continue modeling a sense of respect and responsibility for students. All children need to grow up being respectful, responsible, and as caring citizens who respect themselves and others.

A participant's comment for teachers to be a bit more serious about students' unacceptable behaviors in the classroom was captured in this quote. The participant's quote, "*Teachers should have a more disciplined classroom than I actually observed during the PACTT sessions,*" elaborates the preceding comment about teacher management of classroom discipline. Most participants pointed out those classrooms were noisy to the extent it interfered with teaching/learning process. The participants believed that the classrooms tend to be noisy because they come from different cultures and what works well for one may not do so for another. Therefore, participants state that teachers need to be intentional about understanding each child while identifying the reason(s) behind the behavior the child exhibits in the classroom. Another participant's comment was about the need for parent-teacher collaboration as this may lessen the burden of teachers' jobs and responsibilities. Under this theme, all participants unanimously agreed to the importance of teachers and parents modeling appropriate behavior for children. Regarding this, one participant's quote goes: *Understand the family background to be connected to students: parents' experiences, expectations, beliefs, values, cultures, goals, and languages influence the classroom learning and teaching.* The point is that it takes a joint effort to model appropriate behavior for students, which in turn promote learning and student success.

Within this theme, participants suggested teachers should identify and foster each child's potential through working with their parents. A parent's quote illuminates the point in case. "*I like that, as a parent, I have opportunity to work with school as I am interested in my child.*" The parent reported the importance of attending PACTT sessions in her child's classroom. A participant described how PACTT

gave her opportunity to work with her child's teacher in the classroom. In her words, *“PACTT helped me bridge the learning gap. For example, at times, when my child does not get what the lesson is about, I will explain in my own way and sometimes I use illustrations from our culture/tradition to make my point clear.”* This quote was based on a parent's observation of her child's classroom and the content-related discussion that took place after. Based on the classroom insight the parent gained during the PACTT, she could have some conversation with her child in her native language and she used some examples from their background knowledge rooted in their culture to illustrate the discussion point, which was awesome.

This theme represents the participants' desires for teachers as well as school administrators to have an understanding of parents' expectations, cultures and language background that may improve or impede their endeavor to be school allies for their children's education. The participants understand that they should work with schools to support their children's academic, social, and behavioral development. All the participants reported that the knowledge and skills they gained from the ESL and the PACTT programs made them feel more confident and comfortable to work with their children at home and with teachers in school setting. Regarding her experience in school involvement in the United States, a participant has illuminated the importance of home and school interdependence in her quote as follow:

I am interested in my child, and a label on my shirt says so. In a school, it is very important that parents and their children closely work with teachers, administrators, and the general staff as a community, one as an extension of another, assuming responsibility for one another.

The parent was wearing a shirt labeled *“I am interested in my child”*, and she used the it as an example to affirm how much she is interested in her child. All the participants, as ESL and PACTT team, had shirts with *“I am interested in my child”* printed on them. The essence of the metaphorical expression I captured in the interview was that the parents care too much about their children and they wanted to be partners with teachers.

All the participants embraced the concept of school partnership to address the need of their children's academic, social, and behavioral development. They noted the importance of parents working with their children's teachers while developing mutual trust through the open-door policy, which they used to express the access they have to the school. In their words, they explained the meaning of open-door policy as teachers and administrators as well as all school staff willing to have them in school and work with them. They emphasized the need to portray their heritage culture in the school by using it as a resource. Participants also indicated that they are open to others' cultures and languages without losing their ground (heritage culture and language). A participant pointed out that both worlds (theirs and others) unite at some point, and they have to keep the balance between the two. By both worlds uniting at some point, the participant means that there should be a common understanding between the two worlds while maintaining the heritage culture and language.

Additionally, the participants called for teachers to understand each child's specific needs and offer a variety of learning experiences accordingly. A participant's quote illuminates the point in case as follow:

I expect teachers to bring more intention to the classroom to empower and model each student who struggles in his/her learning and behavior. Immigrant students generally used to think they sink or swim when they come to class. Now there are more bonds between parents and teachers and there are improvements in general.

The participants appreciate the readiness and willingness of the school staff to closely work with immigrant parents. All the participants mentioned that they feel more comfortable during the PACTT sessions because they do hands on activities and they get a sense of classroom environment as an insider while working with their children and teachers.

Model Skills and Knowledge for Parents

Model skills and knowledge parents need to help their children and collaborate with school.

The participants stressed the need for effective partnership between parents and schools. Central to this theme is that parents have their own way of communicating with their children at home. Parents also need to demonstrate support for teachers at home and they need the skills and knowledge to work with teachers and their children effectively. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents all want to know how to collaborate in positive ways with one another (Epstein, 2009; National Center for Family Literacy, 2013). For some parents, language poses a barrier to their involvement. The participants strove to learn English as well as academic, behavioral and social skills to take active roles in their children's learning. Given the right kind of environment, immigrant parents of English Language Learners (ELL) can take active roles in public schools, and they can become administrators' and teachers' best allies in providing the support that their children need at home (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006). Families can more successfully address barriers to learning by working in partnership with schools and the community (Adelman & Taylor, 2002). Adelman and Taylor also indicate that immigrant families do not always understand how schools work and emphasize the need for the necessary support to access to information and local resources to be better schools allies.

Although it can take significant effort to establish a strong link, it is well worth the effort. A participant reported that when she picks up her child from school, she asks him about his day and school experience. The parent gave a few examples of what she learned from the informal conversation with her child while going home as follow:

One day, my child asked me if I knew that H₂O stands for on the way home. Another day, on the way to school, there was heavy rain and he told me 'when it rains, it pours,' and asked me if I knew the meaning of "pouring." It was pouring at the time. I use the time we come to school and go home as moments of learning and fun with my child.

I learned from the participant that the great communication the parent has with their child while commuting to and from school, and that they are resourceful with time in terms of communication and having learning opportunities. The participant brought up her way of parental support for her child's learning as related to her sense of her role and her self-efficacy that had a positive impact on her child's academic and behavioral improvement. All the parents reported that skills and knowledge they gained from the ESL and PACTT helped them to feel comfortable to take risks, believe in themselves, make goals and have the confidence and persistence they need to effectively advocate for their children's education.

Give More Time for ESL and PACTT Sessions

Given the importance of ESL and PACTT classes in terms of child instruction and parent education and support, comments related to concerns of time constraints in both ESL and PACTT sessions. All

participants expressed the importance of a bit longer amount of time to gain more skills and knowledge they need and to have “enough” time to practice and complete the classroom activities. The participants highlighted the importance of coming to their children’s classroom during PACTT sessions to gain a sense of their children’s classroom learning experiences rather than coming to school just for parent teacher conferences or when issues arise. However, all the participants expressed their concerns of time limit in ESL and PACTT classes and suggested for a bit longer time for a meaningful work in a classroom.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the unusual aspects of the family literacy program such as PACTT and the parent education and support group at a primary school in the Rocky Mountain Region. The findings, which are the essences of the participants’ experiences, illuminate the openings and obstacles the parents experienced in their efforts to take active roles in their children’s education. This confirms barriers international migrants face in fully supporting their schoolchildren in the United States and Europe, where English is native and primary language at home and outside in schools, work, etc. (Ahad, Aliyyah and Meghan Benton, 2018; Park, Marki, and Margie McHugh, 2014). Family literacy program and its PACT component at Bobne Primary School was instrumental in serving as a gateway to their children’s classrooms for international migrant parents and in building meaningful relationships between the parents, teachers, and school staff.

The participants expressed their aspiration to become more active partners in the education of their children and to have meaningful relationships with the teachers in order to integrate into the web of the school community buoyed by a common purpose, the education of their children. Yet, many children of international migrants and children from working class and non-mainstream homes come to school not possessing the social capital and therefore cannot access the codes of power (Delpit, 2006) that enable them to succeed at school. A Family Literacy Program examined in this study was instrumental to empowering such parents by giving them access points to literacy, information, and resources they need to empower their children.

Given the importance of collaboration with parents, schools must be equipped to help students and parents overcome barriers that may impede full participation by fostering meaningful home-school interactions and by other viable and creative means such as family literacy program and PACT component. Additionally, school districts must ascertain that programs like adult ESL and PACTT are designed and implemented in schools as needed to ensure the effective participation of intended parents. International migrants are learning English and the host country’s cultures and adjusting with new life, but also they bring assets that schools and community need to recognize and utilize as assets. While avoiding generalizations and dichotomies, educators must view diversity that international migrants bring with them as a source of strength, innovation, and creativity. Such positive and asset-based approach aligns with what Ahad, Aliyyah and Meghan Benton, (2018) suggest—instead of thinking about international migrants as pupils with special needs and challenges, the most promising approaches examine the demands future citizens will face through a skills and strengths lens rather than a solely needs-focused lens. Such an asset-based and positive approach makes them productive in their effort to design innovative and realistic

strategies to support primary school's children's success in literacy and in their partnership efforts with international migrants to support their children's literacy at school and at home.

Limitations

Limitations to the study are as follows: (1) I was partially dependent on an interpreter for Spanish language to elicit information from the Mexican participants. However, the interpreter was qualified for interpreting the language and I had worked with the interpreter for several years as the district cultural liaison that facilitated communication and mutual understanding with the interpreter. Such dependence may affect the essence of the participants' experiences for the interpreter mediated the meaning. However, I was vigilant of the participants' "non-verbal" and "body language" cues during the interviews and the focus groups, follow up interviews with participants as well as discussions and chats were used as means to confirm the accuracy of the data. Thus, such limitation is refuted.

Additionally, my familiarity with the participants and the interpreter created a friendly atmosphere and trust to gain an in-depth data. This research only addressed the parents' experiences with their children's teachers, and did not include the teachers' perspectives. One may argue that an inclusive research of both the parents' and teachers' experiences with each other may yield comprehensive data that enhance our understanding of the point in case. However, the present study aimed at learning from the experiences of the immigrant parents, and it was not the goal of the study to gain a comprehensive data from both parents and teachers. Therefore, such argument is refuted.

Discussion and Implications for Future Practice

The goal of this study was to learn from the international migrant parents about their experience of family literacy and student success, and generalizing from the participants respective racial groups was not the primary concern. Sites where parents network, exchanging information and knowledge about children, learning, and schooling benefits positively impact student success (Lareau, 1987). Family literacy program is where families learn literacy, make friends, and connect and network with fellow parents. This confirms and further suggests the importance of welcoming international migrants into the classroom using PACT, working with them to develop an understanding of curriculum and pedagogy, and supporting them in developing relationships, the family literacy program served to support these international migrant parents.

In conclusion, the unusual aspects of the family literacy program such as PACTT is instrumental for parent education and support group to support student learning. I am particularly fascinated by the PACTT component where the parents get to be an interactive part of their child's classroom with the teacher present. This is a unique opportunity for international migrant parents to observe first-hand the reality of education in the United States as well as being active English Language Learners (ELLs). With the flow of international migrants, schools are increasingly growing diverse in terms of language, culture, and race/ethnicity among all others, and the diversity is good since it is a source of diversity of ideas, creativity, and innovation.

Comparative focus groups between international migrants in the same school community that do not have access to the program might yield significant insights as to how immigrant parents without these

supports have different attitudes about their child's teachers and school. In addition, international migrant fathers' voice may add a unique perspective on the subject of the study and worth pursuing it in future research. The "family, home, and community are the true drivers of a child's education" (National Center for Family Literacy, 2013, para. 3) and families are indeed their child's first and most important teacher, it appears imperative that opportunities be included for them to provide feedback about their experiences in family literacy programs. Further study about how schoolchildren of international migrants, who are also English Language Learners (ELLs), adapt themselves to the new and overlapping linguistic and socio-cultural spaces. Such a study can be an opportunity to learn and inform theory and best practices as well as practices to avoid in the endeavor to effectively educate children of international migrants, while forging positive relationships between home and school.

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