

The Process of Parental Involvement

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The Parental Involvement (PI) Process: A Model

The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model of the PI process is focused on understanding specific elements of the process & relationships among them:

Level 1: What motivates parents to become involved in their students' education?

Level 1.5: What forms of involvement to families choose?

Level 2: What learning mechanisms do parents engage in the course of involvement?

Level 3: How do students perceive their parents' involvement?

Level 4: What important student proximal learning outcomes are influenced by parents' involvement?

Level 5: Student achievement (varied summary measures)



Assumptions About the Parental Involvement Process

- The term “parent/s” incorporates families, extended family & important family social network members;
- Parents’ involvement roles & activities undergo developmentally grounded change across students’ pre-K through secondary years;
- Schools’ abilities to support effective partnerships are grounded in school members’ understanding of (a) the contexts & processes of involvement and (b) the contributions of well-supported parental involvement to student learning;
- The most effective parental involvement generally ‘happens’ in the context of effective family-school relationships, characterized by mutual respect, communication, and trust;
- We focus here somewhat more on the circumstances & needs of schools & communities at some risk of poor, ineffective, or no parental involvement *than* on the circumstances & needs of ‘better off’ or more affluent schools & communities.



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

The model suggests that parents become involved in supporting their students' school learning when:

- Specific personal beliefs (role construction; efficacy) support involvement;
- They receive invitations to involvement from the school, the student's teacher(s), and the student;
- Family life context variables (parent's skills & knowledge, time & energy, and family culture) are taken into account by school members.



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

Personal beliefs* include:

- Role construction for involvement: Does the parent believe s/he *should* be involved?
- Sense of personal efficacy for involvement: Does the parent believe that his/her involvement will “*make a difference*” for the student?
- Note that both variables are socially constructed. Although treated here as personal beliefs, these motivators are notably subject to influence and co-construction by important and trusted others, including members of parents' social networks and school members, e.g., teachers, staff, principals (e.g., Bandura, 1989, 1997; Biddle, 1979, 1986)



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

Contextual motivators of involvement include:

- General school invitations/school climate: Do parents perceive the school as welcoming, school personnel as respectful & interested, school practices as consistently informative and responsive to parental questions & suggestions?
- Specific invitations from teacher(s): Do(es) the student's teacher(s) regularly offer specific, manageable, and reasonable suggestions for parents in helping the student study, learn, and succeed in school?
- Specific invitations from the student: Does the student--on his/her own, or in the context of family-interactive assignments--ask the parent (verbally or behaviorally) for help with school-related work?



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

Parents' life context variables influence parents' ideas about whether they should become involved and, if so, what kinds of involvement they might, should, and can undertake.

Before considering the life context variables (noted on the next slide), a note about family SES: With others (e.g., Desimone, 1999; Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau, 1989), we have suggested that differences in involvement patterns often linked to SES are more productively examined in relation to the variation in family resources and access thereto that often characterize different socioeconomic statuses. Some of the most important resources for parental involvement are included in this category of life context variables . . .



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

Parents' life context variables:

- Parental perceptions of personal knowledge & skills for involvement: these appear to influence parents' ideas about what activities they might undertake with reasonable chances of success;
- Parental perceptions of time & energy for involvement: these ideas and realities often shape parental availability for varied kinds of involvement, as well as the feasibility of varied locations and times of planned involvement activities;
- Family culture



Level 1: What Motivates Parents to Become Involved in Their Students' Education?

Parents' life context variables:

- Family culture: Increasing attention has focused in recent years on the role of family culture in shaping parents' ideas about their involvement in their students' learning. Several very thoughtful research reports have suggested that effective family involvement--particularly in schools serving historically disenfranchised communities and immigrant and refugee families--may be notably dependent on school efforts to attend and respond sensitively and well to elements of family culture and belief (e.g., Collingnon et al., 2001; Comer, 1985; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Hill & Craft, 2003; Moll et al., 1992; Rodriguez, 2009; Ryan et al., 2010).



Level 1.5: Forms of Involvement

- Level 1.5 suggests that when parents become motivated to become active in their children's education, they select from among many forms, consistent with (a) family and student needs & interests and (b) student- school-, or community-generated invitations and opportunities. Forms included in the model are:
 - Expressions of family values, goals, aspirations and expectations for students' learning and education;
 - Involvement in learning activities at home;
 - Parent-teacher-school interactions and communications;
 - Involvement in activities at school
- (Other well-used typologies in the literature are also very helpful in thinking about the variety of ways in which parents may become actively involved, notably Epstein's [1992; & colleagues, 2001, 2004] six types of involvement and Grolnick's [& colleagues, 1994, 1997] identification of parental resources [behavioral, cognitive-intellectual, personal] used in involvement.)



Level 2: What Learning Mechanisms* Do Parents Engage in the Course of Involvement?

- Encouragement: parents' explicit, often affectively charged, support for students' active engagement in activities related to school tasks and learning;
- Modeling: parents serving as a model of interests, attitudes and behaviors linked to successful learning (e.g., motivation to learn, use of goal-setting, strategy adjustment) & explicit modeling in the course of instruction;
- Reinforcement: parents' application of positive, individually and developmentally appropriate consequences for learning behaviors and efforts;
- Instruction: parents' engagement with student in indirect (e.g., showing interest, scaffolding) and direct (e.g., tutoring, practicing, teaching, correcting) forms of instruction.

*These represent *some* of the mechanisms that might be engaged.



Level 3: Student Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Students' perceptions of their parents' involvement are important because:

- Students' perceptions of events mediate the influence of those events on their learning (e.g., Dornbusch et al., 1989; Grolnick et al., 1991)
- Parents' involvement attitudes, values, & behaviors must be perceived and experienced by students if they are to influence student learning (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994);
- The meaning of parents' involvement behaviors is subject to varied understandings, e.g., parent understanding, student understanding (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Xu & Corno, 1998)
- Student perceptions & reports of parental behavior are often better predictors of student outcomes than are parent reports of behavior (e.g. Ibanez et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 1996; Steinberg et al., 1992)



Level 4: What are the Proximal Outcomes (Student Learning Attributes) of Parents' Involvement?

The model includes a selection of student learning attributes that:

- Are subject to parental influence through parental involvement *and*
- When engaged by the student, are quite likely to contribute positively to student learning and school performance.
- They include



Level 4: What are the *Proximal Outcomes* (Student Learning Attributes) of Parents' Involvement?

- Academic self-efficacy: beliefs about one's ability to complete school work successfully;
- (Intrinsic) motivation: interest in learning for its own sake, in addition to* or rather than for external rewards (*School learning generally requires a mix of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; at least some intrinsic motivation is essential for successful school learning across time [e.g., Baumrind, 1989; Hokoda & Fincham, 1995; Roeser et al., 2000]);
- Self-regulation: understanding and using a set of cognitions, metacognitions and behaviors to support successful learning (e.g., goal-setting, self-monitoring, strategy evaluation and adjustment);
- Self-efficacy for help-seeking: believing that help-seeking and engagement with teachers & knowledgeable others will yield positive learning outcomes.



Level 4: What are the *Proximal Outcomes* (Student Learning Attributes) of Parents' Involvement?

Other proximal outcomes often noted in the literature are also important and would also benefit from continued examination as relatively direct outcomes of parents' engagement of learning mechanisms in the course of involvement; for example:

- **Student attitudes about school & education** (e.g., orientation to school, engagement: Catsambis, 2001; Hill et al., 2004; Shomow & Miller, 2001)
- **Student school and study behaviors** (e.g., time & effort on homework, attentiveness in class, enrollment in higher level courses: Balli et al., 1998; Barber & Olsen, 2004; Ginsberg & Bronstein, 1993; Hill et al., 2004)
- **Other student attributes associated with school success** (e.g., work orientation, control understanding: Gronick et al., 2000; Steinberg et al., 1989)



What Do We Know about the Role and Functioning of Each of These Constructs in the Parental Involvement Process?

Parents' motivations for involvement

- Personal psychological beliefs: Role construction and sense of efficacy contribute to parents' decisions about becoming involved (e.g., Anderson & Minke, 2007; Bandura et al., 1996; Deslandes Bertrand, 2005; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Green et al., 2007; Grolnick et al., 1997; Sheldon, 2002; Shumow & Lomax, 2002; Walker et al., in press).
- Contextual invitations to involvement: Specific teacher invitations and specific invitations from the student have emerged as the strongest predictors of parents' involvement to date.* School climate is also important**, but may lose some power in studies where specific invitations (from student & teacher) are included in the variables assessed. (*e.g., Green et al., 2007; Kohl et al., 2002; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000; Shumow; 1998); (**e.g., Christenson, 2004; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Griffith, 1998; Lopez et al., 2000; Simon, 2004).
- Life context variables . . .



What Do We Know about the Role and Functioning of Each of These Constructs in the Parental Involvement Process?

Parents' motivations for involvement

➤ Life context variables

- Knowledge & skills: parents are generally likely to avoid activities where they believe their knowledge & skills are insufficient, and choose those that fit their perceptions of personal knowledge & skills (e.g., Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Grolnick et al., 2000; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995)
- Time & energy: parents are likely to choose those activities that fit within their personal family & work responsibilities & routines (e.g., Clark, 1983; Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Weiss et al., 2003)
- Family culture: parents are likely to choose and engage in activities that are consistent with their family values, beliefs, goals (and language) (e.g., Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Collingnon et al., 2001; Lopez et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2010; Trevino, 2004)



What Do We Know about the Role and Functioning of Each of These Constructs in the Parental Involvement Process?

Parents' use of learning mechanisms

- Encouragement: positively linked to students' learning success, school engagement, successful transition to middle school
(e.g., Catsambis, 2001; Clingenpeel & Pianta, 2007; Grolnick et al., 2001; Martinez-Pons, 1994; Pomerantz et al., 2005)
- Modeling: positively linked to academic orientation, self-regulation, improved achievement
(e.g., Bandura, 1997; Clark, 1983; Crosnoe, 2001; Dearing et al., 2006; Xu, 2004)
- Reinforcement: positively linked to development of more complex learning, successful performance of school tasks, achievement
(e.g., Bandura, 1997; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Ginsberg & Bronstein, 1993; Sanders, 1998)
- Instruction: in direct and indirect forms, positively linked to successful learning task performance, achievement
(e.g., Goncu & Rogoff, 1998; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Shumow, 1998; Sigel, 1990);



What Do We Know about the Role and Functioning of Each of These Constructs in the Parental Involvement Process?

Proximal learning attributes

- Academic self-efficacy: supported by parental involvement & linked to improved school performance as well as other learning attributes supported by involvement, e.g., mastery goal orientation, academic aspirations
(e.g., Bandura et al., 1996; Fan & Williams, 2010; Gonzalez et al. 2002; Grolnick et al., 2000)
- (Intrinsic) motivation: supported by parental involvement & linked to more positive patterns of achievement
(e.g., Bronstein et al., 2005; Deckner et al., 2006; Fan & Williams, 2010; Steinberg et al., 1992)
- Self-regulatory knowledge & skills: supported by parental involvement and linked to improved school performance
(e.g., Brody et al., 1999; Grolnick et al., 2000; Hill et al., 2004; Xu & Corno, 2004)
- Social self-efficacy for help-seeking: theoretically and empirically grounded suggestions of links to school performance
(e.g., Partick, Hicks, & Ryan 1997)



Looking for Further Evidence Regarding the Processes and Outcomes of Parental Involvement*

- Before beginning this section, I want to say that I believe strong and effective parental involvement is most often *enabled* in the context of strong and effective family-school partnerships.
- To the extent that the two ideas may entail (even somewhat) different processes, I'd suggest that each process (purposes, contexts, participants, functions and goals) be examined with an eye toward understanding more fully how each functions best, how each complements the other, and what each--individually or collectively--contributes to students' school success.



Looking for Further Evidence Regarding the Processes and Outcomes of Parental Involvement*

- Systematic, theoretically grounded investigation focused on how each element of the parental involvement (PI) process* functions to support student learning (* the PI process as described in this *and* other models);
- Systematic, theory-driven investigation of schools' involvement processes; for example,
 - What motivates teachers, principals, school districts to become effectively engaged in supporting and benefiting from PI? How do school members' role construction and sense of efficacy for involvement contribute to PI? What district supports may be essential for development of schools' motivation for PI?
 - What “contextual invitations” do school members receive for developing effective PI? (e.g., Is the district actively supportive? Is the principal knowledgeable about PI and her/his leadership in this area)?
 - What knowledge & skills, time & energy, and knowledge of culture(s) do school members need to engage in active and effective support of PI?



Looking for Further Evidence Regarding the Processes and Outcomes of Parental Involvement*

- Several investigators in recent years have made excellent use of large, representative, longitudinal data sets (national, regional) to examine specific issues in PI, as consistent with (and sometimes as limited by) the specific data gathered within a given set. To the extent that questions about the processes and effectiveness of PI can continue to be answered at least in part by such analyses, they should be pursued. (One excellent recent example focused on a specific question regarding PI before, during and after students' transition to high school is Crosnoe's 2009 *Developmental Psychology* report.)
- Similarly, the field would benefit from deeply thoughtful scholarly reviews of research on specific elements and questions relating to PI, its functioning, and its influence on students. (One excellent recent example in this area is Yamamoto & Holloway's 2010 [*Educational Psychology Review*] report on mediating processes through which parents' expectations appear to influence students' academic performance in association with family racial/ethnic status; another is Seginer's 2006 [*Parenting: Science & Practice*] review of PI programs in the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework).



Looking for Further Evidence Regarding the Processes and Outcomes of Parental Involvement*

- We also need continued development of experimental research testing specific hypotheses regarding how and under what conditions varied forms of parental involvement, as well as parents' engagement of learning mechanisms in the course of involvement, positively influence student outcomes;
- Similarly, continued development of strong ethnographic studies of involvement & partnership processes, especially in conditions where such processes may be difficult, is needed to 'fill out' our understanding of factors supporting and hindering effective parental involvement and family-school partnerships, especially in high-needs communities.



THANK YOU 