Teachers’ Collaborative Inquiry about Teacher-Family Communication:

A Design Experiment

BY

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DISSERTATION

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To my mom, Diane Madison, who first wrote this dissertation in my heart.

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Summary

Teacher-family communication is an important, yet complex, professional responsibility. In this study, I examined how knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) of teacher-family communication might support teachers’ fulfillment of that responsibility. I used design methodology (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003) to develop an inquiry model to support three teacher teams in the professional learning community (PLC) in one urban elementary school. Teachers designed communication using principles of social semiotics (Halliday, 1978; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kress, 2009) and culturally responsive family literacy models (Edwards & Piazza, 2013; Wiley, 1996) and used feedback from families to reflect on and analyze its effectiveness. I developed a theoretical model of inquiry about teacher-family communication design that includes 6 types of activities. Three types of activities related to phases of inquiry and directly supported teachers’ knowledge-of-practice development (i.e., designing, enacting, and reflecting & analyzing). Three types of activities propelled the cycles of inquiry (i.e., (re)imagining, developing, and planning for collaboration). In addition, analysis revealed four features of the intervention that supported structural and conceptual integration into the ecology of the PLC: (a) coupling inquiry with school rhythms; (b) supporting design through development; (c) showing, not telling messages; (d) incorporating family feedback. A Teacher-Family Communication Knowledge-of-Practice Rubric was developed to analyze messages about literacy, stances towards families, design, and context of teacher talk and instances of communication with families.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Teacher-family communication is an important, yet complex, professional responsibility. In this study, I examine how knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) of teacher-family communication might support teachers’ fulfillment of that responsibility. In a knowledge-of-practice conception, teachers learn “when they generate local knowledge of practice by working within the contexts of inquiry communities to theorize and construct their work and to connect it to larger social, cultural, and political issues.” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 290).

Today, the practice of teacher-family communication is defined by teacher evaluation frameworks: teachers must engage diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development to meet professional standards (Danielson, 2013; Marzano, 2013; NBPTS, 2012; Urban Education Institute, 2013). Next, I discuss outcomes and impacts of teacher-family communication. I argue that demographic, curricular, and technological changes have predicated a need for teachers who have knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication.

Teacher-family communication has emerged as a responsibility standard because of its role in supporting learning and development for diverse students. Parent perceptions of frequent, welcoming, and responsive communication are associated with better student social skills and behavior (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Minke, Sheridan, Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014) and gains in literacy achievement (Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010). Quality teacher-family communication can facilitate family support and contribute to strong school-family partnerships which temper student risk factors such as poverty, language differences, or immigration status (Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Ultimately, strong school-family partnerships function as an essential support for school
improvement in diverse communities (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Comer, 1993; P. Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999; Taylor & Pearson, 2002).

The context of schooling in the United States has shifted, resulting in the need for teachers to change the way they think about communicating with families. In the past, it may have been enough for teachers to simply tell families about events happening in the school, invite them to special events, and discuss student progress. Today, however, student populations reflect the increasing diversity we see in the broader American population (US Census Bureau, 2012). When families’ cultural backgrounds and personal experiences in education differ from those of the school their perceptions of their role in participating and communicating may not align with school expectations (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Heath, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Likewise, schools may experience complications when communicating with families when the home language differs from that used in the school (Noguerón-Liu, Hall, & Smagorinsky, 2017; Valdés, 1996), when families have limited knowledge of the system (R. Rogers, 2003), or when other responsibilities overwhelm their time (Lareau, 2000). With cultural and linguistic diversity as the norm, teachers need to work towards a partnership stance with families whose backgrounds do not mirror those of the school culture.

As schools have diversified, messages about teaching and learning have also evolved. New waves of standards, assessments, and curricular reforms have spurred changes in classroom teaching and learning (Allington, 2009; Meier & Wood, 2004; Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011; Shanahan, 2011). When changes occur inside classrooms, teachers and schools have a responsibility for sensegiving to the community (Cosner, 2011; Spillane, Kim, & Frank, 2012), by making those changes transparent in communication. Likewise, families and communities can respond to or prompt change in schools by communicating their perspectives and desired goals.
for their children’s education (Comer, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007).

At the same time, communication technologies have rapidly developed, offering the potential to transform quantity and quality of communication between teachers and families. These technologies include widespread adoption of personal computers and low cost printing, expansion of telecom and email systems, and the rise of web and mobile platforms (Crowley & Heyer, 2015). The proliferation of communication channels has made more communication both possible and a cultural norm. Mass communication has become quick and relatively inexpensive, so that schools can easily adopt or expand structures, tools, and routines to facilitate teacher-family communication such as teacher voice mail, newsletters, and electronic platforms for communication (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2015).

These demographic, curricular, and technological developments have made teacher-family communication necessary and possible, but they have also made it complex. In the current study, I sought to develop supports that would facilitate inquiry where teachers could grapple with the challenges and complexities of teacher-family communication, and to empower them to engage in meaningful, ongoing communication with families. I used design methodology (Cobb et al., 2003; Plomp, 2007; Reinking & Bradley, 2008) to develop an inquiry model to support teachers in one PLC. I analyzed teachers’ knowledge-of-practice in their collaborative talk and instances of their communication with families. In the rest of this chapter, I discuss the personal, professional, and scholarly experiences that influenced the present study.

A Personal Journey

Teacher-family communication has been an issue of personal importance to me for many years. As an elementary classroom teacher in urban schools, I strived for strong communication
with the families of my students. I met frequently with families, wrote a weekly newsletter, and used a folder to provide weekly updates on student work and progress. These were never requirements of the schools in which I worked, but stemmed from my childhood experiences with teacher-family communication. Although she never taught formally, my mom studied education in college and utilized her knowledge as a mother of twelve children. As my siblings and I went through school, she used her background and reflective common sense to defend our rights to authentic learning and invite us into the conversation. Being the oldest of my siblings, this home-based apprenticeship in communication analysis eventually spanned the entire K-12 spectrum. Homework assignments, class projects, and notes from teachers were fair game for critical analysis at the dinner table. What was this really teaching? What was this saying about the classroom? About the teacher? What kinds of people were we becoming from it? Was it just? How could the situation be respectfully rectified?

I continued to pursue these questions in my work as a literacy coach and professional developer through a focus on improving instruction through collaboration within the PLC. I maintained that questions of purpose, mission and vision were a central means of making deep and sustained improvements through a transformation of the school culture (Au, 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Raphael, Au, & Goldman, 2009; Taylor & Pearson, 2002). Throughout this time, issues of communicating with and engaging families were important contextual issues, but never the focus of formal or informal professional development I facilitated. My work as a coach and professional developer was about classroom instruction, and families were simply not in the classroom. While their support was welcomed, applauded, and generally encouraged, families were beyond the scope of my instruction-focused work. The only exception was the requirement to implement family literacy events as part of Reading First grant
requirements, and, even then, I received little guidance or direction from my own professional development (Vasquez, 2011).

After years as a privileged insider and curriculum leader, I became relegated to an outsider when my own children entered school. I want to know what my children are learning and how they are being taught, but now my window is limited. At times, I have experienced the confidence and comfort of a productive conversation with a teacher, a clear snapshot of classroom practice. In those moments, I have a feeling of solidarity with my children’s teachers, a feeling that trust had been established and we are working as partners for common goals. At other times I have experienced the frustration and angst of communication gone awry, or more often, the absence of information and communication. I often wonder about how classroom teaching supporting my child. I wonder about what concerns are worth voicing. I wonder how to voice them. In those moments, the time for questions during parent events seems too short and the comment section in the communication folder too small.

As a parent, the challenge of communicating with teachers across cultural and linguistic differences has taken on higher stakes. I am an “emergent bilingual” (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008) in Spanish, a white woman with suburban roots married to a second-generation Mexican-American who is a native Spanish speaker. Our children attend a dual language school with instruction in Spanish and English where many of their teachers have been native Spanish speakers of Latin American origin. While we can find a mix of English and Spanish words to speak and understand each other, I sometimes feel like conversation is “good enough.” I wonder what words I miss in my translation. I wonder what subtleties are lost. I wonder if my ideas are really translating. My race, first language, and professional background give me extensive cultural capital in schools, so I cannot claim I have no power in communication relationship with
my children’s teachers and administrators. At the same time my experience has given me a taste of the challenges of communication that come with being a cultural and linguistic outsider of teacher-family communication.

A Turning Point

My first experiences as a parent of school children coincided with my starting doctoral studies and I found myself examining schools and families in lights of new research and theory. In the spring of 2012, I had a conversation about schools with a stylist at my neighborhood hair salon. In a mix of Spanish and English, she told me her about her recent school experiences with her son in kindergarten. She had such an angst-filled relationship with her son’s first teachers that in mid-year she transferred him to a new school, Fisher Elementary (a pseudonym). She had tears in her eyes as described how happy she was with the new school; Fisher was different. The teachers really listened to her worries and concerns, whether she voiced them in Spanish or English. When she communicated with them, the teachers made it clear that they were taking the time get to know and understand her son as a learner and as a person. Even though her son had transferred mid-year, teachers were willing and able to explain what they were doing in the classroom and what that meant for her son. The teachers’ communication, both what they said and how they treated her, made a world of difference for her son and her family.

As she recounted her story, I realized that I knew these same teachers and had witnessed their strong communication myself. During the 2011-2012 school year, I had worked as a member of a team supporting teachers from schools who were considered “Early Adopters” of the Common Core State Standards. Dozens of schools participated, including K-5 teachers at Fisher Elementary. Grade level teams across the city came together for a full day each quarter to collaboratively design and develop exemplar units based on the English Language Arts Common
Core Standards. On several such days throughout the year, I had the opportunity to facilitate several of the Fisher teams’ work. In the conversations, it became evident that Fisher teachers (and a handful of teams from other schools) stood out because of their knowledge of literacy and the confidence they demonstrated in talking about literacy. Their discussions and unit plans revealed that they were knowledgeable about the standards and their existing literacy curriculum and units of study. They could articulate which aspects of the new units represented shifts in their practice and which were extensions of current practice. The conversations often showed evidence of knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999): they could articulate their classroom practice and their theories and rationale for it.

In my research, I began to explore communication connections between the professional learning community and families in the wider school learning community. To examine the kinds of messages and stances schools communicated to families, I conducted an analysis of the home page and parent pages of 250 school websites (Vasquez, 2014). I found that some schools used their websites to offer an invitation to dialogue with families through interactive tools, current events, and personalized words and images. However, many websites maintained an institutional tone with a focus on functional content such as rules and logistics; they were constructed in a didactic, static way that focused on telling information to families.

My colleagues and I conducted survey and focus group research with families about teacher-family communication (Vasquez, Walski, & Rao, 2014) in my own children’s school. We found that families wanted information and appreciated the information that they received, especially in the early grades. At the conclusion of our research, we made recommendations to the administration; some were taken up and others were not. I realized that if this notion of message and stance would really be taken up, it needed to be integrated into the message and
stance of the PLC. However, I knew from my experience as a literacy coach and professional developer that effective professional collaboration does not come in easily or automatically.

The current study emerged as a response to these events and investigations. I wanted to develop a way to connect the dots that I saw emerging. I wanted to support teachers in communicating with families about the classroom work they were already striving to improve. As I developed my thinking about how such support could be structured, I reached out to the principal and two grade level teams from Fisher who all agreed to participate in the study.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this design experiment, I sought to embed teacher inquiry about teacher-family communication into a professional community in an elementary school serving a culturally and linguistically diverse community. In this chapter I review theory that informed the study. I begin by presenting four historical paradigms to demonstrate how the practice of teacher-family communication has been manifested in different cultural and historical contexts: the community paradigm, the support paradigm, parallel paradigm, and the design paradigm. Next, I use the lens of social semiotics to unpack the practice of teacher-family communication (Halliday, 1978; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kress, 2009). Third, I review characteristics of design-based research that made it a methodological fit for the study. Then I review research that informed the goal of the intervention, including family literacy literature and research in teacher learning that informed my thinking about how intentional design of teacher-family communication might be (re)imagined for partnership. Finally, to inform the design of the intervention, I review literature related to professional development and teacher inquiry in the PLC.

Teacher-Family Communication in Four Paradigms

Four paradigms of schooling, literacy, and family engagement have informed teacher-family communication: the community paradigm, the support paradigm, the parallel paradigm, and the design paradigm. Each paradigm represents a mindset that frames messages and stances that teachers communicate to families, and processes by which they communicate them. I present the paradigms as an historical progression, but their development and existence have overlapped and intertwined. All four paradigms are manifested to some degree in schools today.
Community Paradigm

Historically, teacher-family communication and teacher-family relationships were not seen as an ‘issue,’ as children and youth were educated under a community paradigm, where learning occurred through apprenticeship and participation in the community (Rogoff, 1990).

Learning by apprenticeship often occurred between children and members of their own families, and when learning occurred through apprenticeship with another community member, there were countless opportunities for families to interact and communicate with those teachers. Thus, the “teacher-family” communication process was emergent in face-to-face interactions within the community. The recursive process of communication in the community paradigm created an ongoing network of support for children’s learning and development, illustrated in Figure 1,

Figure 1. The Community Paradigm of Teacher-Family Communication

In the community paradigm, families and communities were the teachers and the “curriculum” focused on what was needed in the community. Literacy was informed and cultivated by tradition, entailing a repertoire of knowledge and skills necessary to communicate and subsist in the community. This curriculum of tradition did not rapidly change, nor was it comprised of fixed, absolute conventions; rather, it involved initiating the next generation into
“the customs, methods, and working standards” (Dewey, 1974) of the community. In some cases this repertoire included, or even emphasized, literacy as reading and writing, but not necessarily (Graff, 1987; Scribner & Cole, 1978).

**Support Paradigm**

Organized schooling brought on a different paradigm of teacher-family relationships and communication which I characterize as a *support paradigm*. In the support paradigm families and schools become two separate spheres of influence on children’s learning and development. The formal organization of school removed the processes of teaching and learning out of the purview of families. In a support paradigm, teacher-family trust was “passive” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009) in that teachers and families did not actively work to cultivate it. Professionals (i.e., the teachers) handled the job of educating children and families while families were removed from the educative dimensions of schools, supporting their construction and funding of schools (Lareau, 1987; Overstreet & Overstreet, 1949). The removal of families was a gradual process which was fully manifested as the western world moved towards universal schooling after the industrial revolution (Musgrove, 1960). Illustrated in Figure 2, the support paradigm distances children from families and puts the responsibility for their education in the hands of teachers.

Historically, the support paradigm corresponded with the view of the curriculum as a discrete set of skills and knowledge to be mastered. If families wanted their children to be educated, they sent them to school to master the content. School-based literacy instruction focused on developing an understanding of proper grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension skills (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Pearson, 2009). Teacher-family communication was considered unnecessary and largely nonexistent in this context, with families and teachers rarely interacting.
and communicating. Information communicated to families in the support paradigm consisted of primarily holistic summaries of student progress and focused on mastery (or lack) of expected skills and knowledge (Spring, 2016).

**Figure 2. The Support Paradigm of Teacher-Family Communication**

![Figure 2](image)

**Parallel Paradigm**

In recent years, school and curricular reforms have given rise to a new approach to families that I characterize as the *parallel paradigm* emphasizes The parallel paradigm is market and performance-driven with families positioned as “customers” (Etzioni, 1975). Social justice is served through narrowing the achievement gap, while the teachers’ job is to deliver results to the community. Teachers work towards accountability goals and families are free to choose schools that “measure up” for their children. The parallel paradigm acknowledges that families play an important role in educating children, but takes a hands off approach.

In the parallel paradigm, teacher-family communication focuses on the performance of students in relation to standards of excellence and rallying families to support students in reaching those standards (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). As illustrated in Figure 3, families and
teachers are positioned as two parallel rails of a ladder. Teacher-family communication is represented as rungs connecting the rails, ensuring a stable, parallel relationships between schools and families. It assumes that more communication yields stronger and more stable relationships between schools and families. However, this paradigm assumes that the two separate entities of teachers and families are aligned and working toward the same goals. It assumes that every message can be transmitted and received as represented and intended by the communicator. At best, this paradigm can instill public confidence in schools and achievement results, at worst, it imbues growing suspicion and active mistrust on the part of the community (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

**Figure 3. The Parallel Paradigm of Teacher-Family Communication**

**Design Paradigm**

While the efforts and policies of the parallel paradigm to expand teacher-family communication channels are well-intentioned, the expansion of communication channels does not guarantee quality teacher-family communication. Today there is a growing call for something different. I characterize this call as the *design paradigm*, where the school works
“through the community, not aside from it or against it” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p. 79). In many effective schools, the design paradigm is alive and at work. In summarizing research related to school, family, and community from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), Taylor and Pearson stress the centrality of communication in building relationships:

Looking across the entire corpus of CIERA work focused on relations with home and community, the common thread is communication. Where communication between groups is nonexistent or laden with tension, blame and low achievement are likely outcomes. Where lines of communication are open, where different groups are sensitive to and respectful of the views of others, and where resources are made available to support families in their quest to support their children and the schools they attend, achievement is more likely to be enhanced. (Taylor & Pearson, 2004, p. 171).

Across these contexts, effective communication was not merely frequent but also “open,” “respectful” and supportive of a “quest” for education. Thus to forge trust and establish authentic level of quality communication, teachers and schools must also attend to stance and the relationships they are seeking to establish with families through that communication.

The design paradigm takes its blueprints from the community paradigm as it seeks to build communication between teachers and families through ongoing communication. In many neighborhood schools across the United States, teachers and families may have limited opportunities for the informal, face-to-face interaction that was a hallmark of the community paradigm. The complexities of globalization (e.g., immigration) and our information-driven, post-industrial world (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007) mean that it is impossible in many schools to
have families blindly “support” schools or receive neutral transmissions of a messages from teachers and leaders.

Foremost among the complexities of teacher-family communication is actively (re)cultivating trust among teachers, schools, and families and their community (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Communication between teachers and families must be reimagined as a process to build trust and a common understanding of vision and purpose. Thus, the design paradigm looks to rebuild public and community trust at a personal level through communication design, through meaningful exchange that affirms both teachers and diverse families.

The design paradigm, illustrated in Figure 4, takes the shape of the community paradigm as teachers and families become integral partners to support children. The design paradigm foregrounds the principles of democracy. The design paradigm aims for a balance of professionalism and community engagement (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), where both teachers and families have a voice in the purpose and aims of the education, albeit with distinct roles in the school community.

**Figure 4. The Design Paradigm of Teacher-Family Communication**
Teacher-Family Communication Practice: A Theoretical Framework

In common language, the term practice refers to “what teachers do’ in common” (Lampert, 2009, p. 9) to educate students in the context of schools. While classroom instruction is the central practice of teachers, it is situated within and related to complex repertoires of practice, including communication with families. Social semiotic theories of communication illuminate how the parts and process of communicating with families relate to the classroom practices of teaching and learning.

Instances of discourse are shaped and organized through three interrelated metafunctions: interpersonal, ideational, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The interrelationship of these “parts” of communication is illustrated in Figure 5. In teacher-family communication, the interpersonal metafunction enacts a social relationship or stance between the teachers and families. The ideational metafunction refers to the messages teachers are communicating to families about teaching and learning. The textual metafunction is the design of the communication that organizes and binds the interpersonal and ideational metafunctions into a unit that is recognizable as a communication.

Figure 5. Metafunctions of Teacher-Family Communication

Teacher-family communication is emergent through a design process: the meaning-making sequence of representation, communication, and interpretation (Kalantzis & Cope,
The process, illustrated in Figure 6, begins with teachers making sense of the message and stance they want to represent. In the communication design, the metafunctions are manifested through language, images, gestures, or other modes. Finally, families hear or see the communication and interpret its meaning. In each part of the sequence, the stance and message is not transmitted unchanged, but represented and interpreted through the lenses of the teachers and families.

**Figure 6. Teacher-Family Communication Design Sequence**

At one level, the social practice of teacher-family communication can be identified as an individual instance of communication (e.g., sending a note to the students’ home, a parent-teacher conference). At another level, the practice of teacher-family communication can become a lens used to understand the identity of a particular community of practice, situated within a particular social and historical context (Wenger, 1998). Gee distinguishes instances of communication as “small ‘d’ discourse” and notions of identity as “big ‘D’ Discourse:”

A Discourse with a capital ‘D’ is composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading coupled with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools,
and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable identities (Gee, 2011, p. 37).

Taken together, over time, and across members, individual instances of teacher-family communication compose the Discourse that characterizes the distinctive ways that teachers and families interact in a particular school’s learning community.

Drawing on Gee’s constructs, I supported teachers in examining their Discourse of teacher-family communication through reflection, analysis, and design of particular instances of their communication (i.e., discourse). Teachers examined the parts and processes of their communication with a focus on their messages and stances. In my study, reflection, analysis, and design of messages was grounded in the premise that parents across all social classes and backgrounds want a strong core curriculum in language arts and STEM subjects and opportunities for their children to develop good study skills, critical thinking, and communication skills (Zeehandelaar & Winkler, 2013). Families in a variety of home situations, levels of education, language, and culture can and want to support their children’s literacy learning and development (Compton-Lilly & Greene, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Families need sufficient awareness of what’s happening in the classroom teaching and learning to participate effectively in decision making for their own children and for the school (Comer, 1993; R. Rogers, 2003).

At the same time, in my study, reflection, analysis, and design of the stance communicated to families was equally important as the information about learning that is communicated in building authentic partnership with families (Mapp, Johnson, Strickland, & Meza, 2008). The personal qualities of teachers’ interactions are critical in building the relationship (Jeynes, 2010), with the affective stance of the communication playing a bigger role
Design-Based Principles for Intervention Development

In this section, I discuss three features of design experiments (Cobb et al., 2003) that make it well suited to the aims of my study. First, design experiments are theory-oriented. In the present study I aimed to develop theoretical grounding for the principles and features of an intervention and local instructional theory to describe the teacher learning in light of the intervention. In this way, my study has characteristics of two types of design research: development studies and validation studies (Plomp, 2007). As a development study, I aimed to develop an intervention (teacher inquiry in the PLC) as a solution to a complex problem in a particular school context (quality teacher-family communication in a diverse elementary school), while developing design principles that could be re-used in other contexts. As a validation study, I aimed to develop local instructional theories that explain how the intervention supported teacher learning and practice and to study the learning and practice that emerged from teachers’ participation in the intervention.

Second, design experiments are iterative. In planning a design experiment the researcher must begin with the goal and a plan for reaching that goal, but must embed opportunities for ongoing iterative analysis towards that goal (Reinking & Bradley, 2008). The current study was both prospective and reflective (Cobb et al., 2003) in that I was able to iteratively test prospective possibilities for teacher-family communication to see whether or not the theory would work while also able to reflectively analyze alternative conjectures.
Third, design experiments are interventions situated in authentic contexts. In the present study, I sought to understand and improve the design of teacher-family communication with teachers in their authentic grade level teams in a real elementary school. I intended to engineer the teacher learning contexts to deepen teachers’ knowledge-of-practice of teacher family communication while increasing the quality and quantity of design of teacher-family communication. This context allowed for the examination of the phenomenon, design of teacher-family communication, and how it is situated in the learning ecologies of teachers and their relationships with each other, students, and families (Snow, 2015). In designing my study, I aimed to make these theories work for the teachers who participated so that they could use them to design actual communication that effected their communication and relationship with their students’ families.

Finally, design experiments allow for a balanced relationship between teachers and researchers. The iterative nature and the authentic context of design experiments afford the possibility of a reciprocity between researcher and teachers that can facilitate both teacher and researcher change through knowledge building (Yaden Jr & Tam, 2000). When I initially conceived the study, I used theory and literature discussed in this chapter to prospectively design an intervention to build teachers’ knowledge-of-practice about teacher-family communication. I took a stance as participant-observer to build my knowledge of the learning context and participants through participation and facilitation in collaborative inquiry and analysis of interviews, surveys, and instances of teacher-family communication. Understanding existing practices and culture of the context was critical to determining the instructional starting point (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006). As I collaborated with teachers in planning and implementing phases of the intervention, I aimed for these designs to be further specified and adjusted to allow
us to build joint knowledge and collaborations to support teacher-family communication. In the next section, I discuss the literature that informed the goal of my study.

The Intervention Goal

Grounded in the design paradigm, the goal of the current study was to facilitate opportunities for teachers to demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of communication design so as to engage diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development. The goal is aligned to four dimensions of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) conception of knowledge-of-practice. First, knowledge-of-practice entails an expanded conception of what constitutes practice. It is not strictly bound by classroom instruction, but is expanded and deepened to attend to the context of the school and society. An expanded conception of practice has the potential to deepen responsibilities to children, families, and communities while transforming relationships among colleagues. Second, knowledge-of-practice is both practical and theoretical. It seeks to understand, articulate, and change practice, but it also seeks to connect those changes to larger theoretical and social issues and efforts to transform them. Third, knowledge-of-practice is generated and improved through collective inquiry involving teachers of all levels of experience and expertise. No teacher is an empty vessel; all teachers take an inquiry stance as active participants and generators of new understandings. Fourth, knowledge-of-practice alters the power balance between researchers and practitioners. Teachers’ inquiry and researchers’ formal research can both add perspective and value to the field.

In the following sections, I review literature related to teacher-family communication, family literacy, and family engagement in light of the goal of the study. To work towards the design paradigm requires explicit attention and intention to each step in the communication process and the metafunctions of the message. Specifically, I discuss how knowledge of teacher-
family communication design (i.e., communication metafunctions and process) might afford engagement of diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development.

**Metafunctions of Teacher-Family Communication for Partnership**

For many teachers and schools, working within the design paradigm requires a shift from the limited communication of the support paradigm or the numbers-focused communication of the parallel paradigm. In the design paradigm, communication shifts from being about literacy to shared partnership for literacy and equity, attending to both message and stance. Three teacher-family approaches, adaptation, accommodation, and incorporation approaches (Edwards & Piazza, 2013; Wiley, 1996) developed in family literacy program research offer insight in how to integrate message and stance for families. Each of the three approaches seeks to work towards equity for families through different kinds of information for and from families.

First, adaptation approaches give families access to the knowledge and language needed to advocate for their children and participate in decision making in the school (e.g., Edwards, 1995; Rodríguez-Brown, 2009). Adaptation approaches involve teachers making the genre of school learning and literacy transparent and accessible to families through “moments of inclusion” where teachers explicate the objectives necessary to complete or access a school task (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Second, accommodation approaches seek to move beyond assumptions to listen to families and understand their culture and literacy practices in a meaningful and personal way (e.g., Allen & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2004). Accommodation approaches involve teachers listening and valuing what can be learned and understood through the community. These approaches are particularly salient for immigrant groups where cultural beliefs and experiences with education and schooling may be vastly different than in the US. For example, listening to families can help
teachers understand when families might not engage in expected parent-involvement activities (Doucet, 2011) or better understand the influence of the educational contexts in families’ home country (Garcia Coll et al., 2002).

Third, incorporation approaches seek to formally incorporate families’ funds of knowledge and expertise into the curriculum and school itself (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Serpell, 1997). Incorporation strives to recontextualize knowledge and epistemology of the community as value in the classroom (Rodriguez, 2013). Incorporation approaches typically require teachers’ adoption of ethnographic methods to deeply understand families and communities (González et al., 2005; Heath, 1983). Edwards characterized incorporation approaches as the “heart of consensus” where teachers and families achieve partnership (2003).

In concert with one another, adaptation, accommodation, and incorporation approaches offer a balanced approach to integrating messages about literacy with responsive stances towards families. The culturally responsive family engagement model illustrated in Figure 7 (adapted from Edwards & Piazza, 2013; Wiley, 1996) illustrates how the three approaches theoretically relate to one another. At the foundation, teachers give families access to power through information about school teaching and learning and seek to understand families and respond to their culture. Through awareness of their own practice and the practices of the community, they can incorporate families’ funds of knowledge into the structure of school. In turn, this becomes part of the curriculum to be communicated.
In my view, the three teacher-family approaches correspond to the process sequence of communication shown in Figure 6. In adaptation approaches teachers represent messages and stances about the curriculum: teachers and schools need to have a clear sense of what the interest and vision of the curriculum is and make that transparent for families. In accommodation approaches they seek families’ interpretations and perspectives: the staff cannot “co-opt” families, but must seek to understand the hopes and dreams of families. In incorporation approaches teachers interpret families’ perspectives and incorporate them into the messages and stances of the school, to ultimately extend and expand the vision of the school (Driscoll, 1995). In this sequence adaptation and accommodation approaches form the foundation of the design paradigm and are necessary to sustain incorporation.

**Representation of interest**

The first phase of the communication process is representation. In my study the representation phase occurred when teachers collaboratively made judgments about what was important to communicate to families. I begin this section with some theoretical considerations.
about representation. Then I discuss representation in the adaptation and accommodation approaches.

Finding ways to represent teachers’ and families’ interests in accessible and comprehensible ways was essential in working towards the goal of engaging diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development. Classroom teaching and learning is complex. As humans, we can never produce a full representation of our meaning, only signs that represent what is “of interest” (Kress, 2009) to the communication producer, and these communicative signs (i.e., the words or images) and the signified (i.e., the experience or the meaning) have an arbitrary relationship (Kress, 2011). Home and school have been characterized as “worlds apart” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978) and what is of interest or important to teachers may or may not be of immediate interest or importance to families. On the other hand, teachers and families may share the same interest, but may communicate messages in a manner inaccessible, or even incomprehensible to the other.

Representation in the adaptation approach requires teachers to reflect on and articulate their own work in the classroom and how it relates to the mission and the vision of the school. Effective schools are able to direct their essential supports, including family-school relationships, towards the desired school culture (Erickson, 1987; Hoy, 1990). Schools can begin to articulate their literacy culture by creating a comprehensive and principled vision of the literate graduate (Au, Strode, Vasquez, & Raphael, 2013) and communicate to families how that vision is manifested in classroom pedagogies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).

Representation in the accommodation approach is complementary. In this approach teachers create opportunities for families to reflect on their children’s learning and development and allow families to articulate their own “frames of reference they use to understand how
children learn” (Goldenberg et al., 1992, p. 530). Dialogue with families can serve as a local external validity check on the principles themselves, expanding teachers’ conceptions of literacy (González et al., 2005) and adding potential value and coherence in an environment of rapid policy change (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Families’ cultural background and personal experiences in education influence families’ perceptions of their role in communicating with the school and their choices in engaging in with the school in communication (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Heath, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Even when backgrounds of teachers and families are the same, teachers need awareness of structural issues as structural issues may impede families participation in communication such as home-school conferences (McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008).

**Communication**

The second phase of the communication process is the act of communication itself. In my study this was the phase when teachers communicated their representation using language or other modes (i.e., gesture, visual, etc.). Limitations of mode, time, and space in teacher-family communication exacerbate the limits of interpersonal communication. The physical separation of home and school requires that teacher-family communication occur asynchronously (e.g., email or newsletters) or in constrained time and places (e.g., semi-annual parent-teacher conferences) (Lareau, 2000; Valdés, 1996). Teachers’ production and families’ consumption of these communication artifacts is dependent on literacy practices, including language and literacy in print. These communication artifacts are often technically constructed with complex representational burdens such as lengthy passages of text with complex, professional vocabulary (Linse, 2011).
Teachers need a repertoire of communication design strategies to facilitate communication amidst a myriad of other responsibilities. As professional learners, teachers need to understand broad principles of communication design, particularly for asynchronous communication. Asynchronous messages are designed, read and received at different times and in different places means with less opportunities for both communicator and receiver to check for understanding (Kress, 2009) and more opportunities for misunderstanding. Teachers must know how to make communication comprehensible for families from the outset (Heath, 1983; Linse, 2011). They must also consider accessibility, which includes offering communication in families’ native languages, as well as location, platform, and organization of communication to ensure access the information when they need it (Noguerón-Liu et al., 2017; Valdés, 1996). Teachers need support in showing not telling through effective layouts, images, and concise jargon-free language (Dabner, Calvert, & Casey, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Tognazzini, 2014).

In schools serving linguistically diverse families, language of teacher-family communication represents a basic access point of materials. Language presents a barrier for families in communicating their understandings, feelings, and ideas about their children to schools such as language (Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Noguerón-Liu et al., 2017; Valdés, 1996). Whether or not teachers are multilingual teachers, translation adds time to the design and development of written communication. Often communicating across languages means teachers must translate both the words of the language (i.e., Spanish to English), as well as translation of cultural practices and norms implied in that language (Mapp et al., 2008).
Opportunities for interpretation

In the third phase of communication, interpretation, families receive and make sense of the messages and stances communicated by teachers. A learning-focused message can only be considered effectively communicated when teachers take a dialogic, responsive stance to understand families’ interpretations. No matter the frequency of communication, it is important to distinguish between communication that families “receive and attend to” and how they “perceive and interpret” that communication. Perceived and interpreted communication is linked to the effectiveness of communication (Ames, de Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995). In schools serving families of diverse cultures, languages, and social classes, personal experience, beliefs, assumptions, and ideologies of teachers often put educators in a communicative position of power (Compton-Lilly, 2007; Heath, 1983; Lareau, 2000; R. Rogers, 2003; T. Rogers, Tyson, & Marshall, 2000; Valdés, 1996). Assuming the communicative power holder also holds responsibility to check for understanding, at a minimum, teachers cannot consider messages “delivered” to families unless families have an opportunity to demonstrate that they “got the message.” Likewise, when teachers receive communication from families they must make their interpretation known to families to work towards a common understanding. In short, when teachers and schools want to work towards an authentic partnership, they must take it further than simply ‘getting’ the message.

Opportunities for interpretation must be fostered in face-to-face communication and asynchronous written or digital teacher-family communication. In her examination of parent teacher conferences, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003, p. 3) found teachers and families often fell victim to the “doorknob phenomenon” where they hesitated to say what was on their minds until their hand was on the doorknob to leave. She interprets the teacher-family dialogue (or silences)
as a “tiny stage” within the theater society where we are all playing out dramas of race and class with plentiful texts and subtexts. On this stage, teachers and families communicate and act alongside ghosts in the classroom, the personal experiences teachers, families, schools, and society.

Listening to families, teachers must be open and willing to move beyond interpretations of affirmation. Teachers who expect positive, supportive, compliant engagement from families in adaptation approaches may perceive alternate interpretations as an attempt to undermine authority (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Whether making their classroom practice transparent or seeking to learn about families, teachers must be open to enter a contact zone (Pratt, 1991), all the while aiming for productivity (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

A foundational level of interpretation is that if communication is developed and enacted it must be accessed and received. Digital channels of communication such as text messaging and social media can be a boon to quick, frequent communication with families (Crisp, 2009; Mazza, 2013). Noguerón-Liu and colleagues demonstrated that families benefited from collaborative, scaffolded support to access digital communication channels such as a listserv, from opening a web browser, to accessing the listserv sign up on the school web page (Noguerón-Liu et al., 2017).

In the next section, I discuss literature that informed the design of the intervention, the means to reach the goal discussed in this section.

**The Intervention Means**

The intervention’s design was informed by four areas of research related to professional learning. First, I examined existing research on professional development related to teacher-family communication. Second, I considered the ecology of the professional learning
community. I looked to an inquiry approach to develop both theoretical and practical knowledge related to teacher-family communication. Finally, I reviewed two mechanisms through which teachers can share their practice in collaborative professional learning.

**Professional Development and Teacher-Family Communication**

Professional development and professional collaboration can increase teachers’ engagement in teacher-family communication (Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001; Marschall & Shah, 2016) and foster teachers’ sense of self efficacy in communicating with families (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p.; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002). Teachers’ self-efficacy in dealing with families is significantly correlated to teacher-family communication practice, including sending home information on homework and policy, sending home calendars with home activities, and strategies to promote literacy at home (Garcia, 2004). The more communicative the teachers, the more likely the parents are to see their role as getting involved and consequently get involved (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The more teachers and schools do outreach to families, the more likely families are to get involved (Sheldon, 2005).

While the design paradigm presumes frequent communication with families, it requires attention to the messages and relationships that are communicated and silenced in that communication. In one study, teachers sent more newsletters, information about class activities, and more ideas to support their children at home when provided support to increase the frequency and structure of communication (Ames et al., 1995). In another study, teachers trained in the Family-school conference (FSC) model engaged in professional learning to think differently about their relationship and communication with families, and then were supported in manifesting these (re)imagined beliefs by in a structured conference format. The format
strengthened parents and teachers trust in that it “supported better communication, increased learning about each other, and a greater sense of shared responsibility” (Minke & Anderson, 2003, p. 64) in preparing and participating in the conference.

Finally, in professional learning in the Funds of Knowledge tradition teachers receive intensive support in conducting home visits and ethnographic interviews to “see the culture” in the teacher-family relationship and affirm the funds of knowledge that culturally and linguistically diverse families afford their children (Allen et al., 2002; González et al., 2005; Katz & Bauch, 1999; P. Reyes et al., 1999). After engaging in such inquiry, teachers are prepared to take an asset-based partnership stance in communication, engage in two-way dialogue with diverse families, and incorporate families Funds of Knowledge into curriculum and instruction in the classroom. Although the Funds of Knowledge supports have been widely researched, they demand significant knowledge (i.e., ethnographic training) and support (i.e., to be implemented successfully. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I designed the study to focus on adaptation and accommodation approaches to communication as a foundation for incorporation approaches (i.e., Funds of Knowledge) in the future.

Ecology of the Professional Learning Community

One limitation of much of existing teacher inquiry research about families is that it is often investigated and implemented outside of the context of the professional learning community (PLC). Inquiry research has been conducted in university course settings (Baum & Swick, 2008; Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Graue, 2005; Katz & Bauch, 1999), implemented with a subset of teachers (González et al., 2005; McIntyre, Kyle, Moore, Sweazy, & Greer, 2001), or reported independently of other school improvement initiatives (Compton-Lilly & Greene, 2010; Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Many existing interventions related to teacher-family professional
development have been investigated, implemented, or reported independently of other school improvement initiatives, making it difficult to gauge their impacts on family-school relationships. Valdés argues that these approaches fail “to take into account how social inequalities, educational ideologies, educational structures, and interpersonal interactions work together to affect educational outcomes” (1996, p. 195). In other words, while a family-focused intervention may be successful in its immediate outcomes, its long term impacts may be muted by other structural barriers within the school. While others have addressed such criticisms by more comprehensive interventions such as community schools (e.g., Keith, 1996) or promise zones neighborhoods (e.g., Dobbie & Fryer Jr, 2011), the scale of such interventions requires significant structural supports for installation and sustainability. For these reasons, I sought to integrate professional learning about teacher-family communication into the collaborative practice of the PLC.

When inquiry is embedded in the professional learning community (PLC), teachers can collectively develop awareness of ecological contexts surrounding that practice and work to integrate their learning into the context (Horn, 2005; Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, & Moller, 2014). Thus, embedding professional learning about teacher-family communication into the PLC can help teachers situate their communication practice in the context of their overall professional practice. Teachers in contemporary schools are navigating complex messages, pressures, priorities, and initiatives (O’Donnell, Lambert, & McCarthy, 2008). Embedding the learning within the PLC allows them to negotiate and account for these complexities as they learn and work to improve their practice. By explicitly addressing these complexities, the new learning has greater potential to be sustained over time (Fuller & Clarke, 1994). Collaborative inquiry allows for teachers of diverse backgrounds to draw and build upon each other’s expertise and support
diverse teachers dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse students, (Adair, Tobin, & Arzubiaga, 2012). Within the PLC, inquiry can help teachers conduct research to come to deeper understandings about the principles that undergird their practice and realign them to the mission and vision of the community (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Nelson, Slavit, & Deuel, 2012; Nelson, Slavit, Perkins, & Hathorn, 2008).

Strong PLCs have infrastructure in place for teachers to collaborate with colleagues (Bryk et al., 2010; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Collaboration can help to create coherence across the school (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Coherence was of particular importance in my study as evidence suggests that communication with families lessens as students get older (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp et al., 2008). In my study I hoped that embedding inquiry in the PLC would bring equitable teacher-family communication to more classrooms and build potential sustainability.

Embedding professional learning in the PLC can also potentially transform the ecology of the PLC itself. Teachers who are the most likely to have self-efficacy in communicating with families are also the most likely to talk to their colleagues about communicating with families (Gartmeier et al., 2016). The more teachers who are engaged in high-quality communication, the stronger the trust and the more positive the school climate (Adams et al., 2009; Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

**Face of Practice**

The transparency by which teachers share the face of their practice influences the potential for collective learning; the more that teachers can “see” one another’s practice clearly and completely, the more potential they have to learn from one another. In strong PLCs, teachers can articulate the “face of practice” (Little, 2002) that might otherwise remain veiled. Since
teachers normally engage in teacher-family communication practice in isolation, their messages, stances, and processes are not necessarily known to their colleagues. Kazemi and Hubbard (2008) outline three structures by which the face of practice can be brought into professional development: (a) depiction of practice in cases, video, or teacher talk; (b) examination of artifacts from practice; (c) and enactment through participation in role play. In designing my study, I focused on opportunities for depiction of practice in teacher talk and examination of artifacts as these are the structures that most commonly occur in professional learning embedded within the PLC and have the most potential to be sustained without an outside facilitator (Horn & Kane, 2015; Horn & Little, 2010; Nelson et al., 2012).

**Depiction of practice.** Through talk with their colleagues, teachers depict their practice through images or stories that capture the events of practice (Kazemi & Hubbard, 2008). Horn (2010) identified two conversational devices teachers used to share images and stories of practice: replays and rehearsals. In replays, teachers recount their words, actions, and thoughts about past experiences of practice. In rehearsals, teachers present the words, actions, and rationale for how they might act in future practice. In productive conversations, teachers probe one another for more detail to elicit elaborate, multivocal replays and rehearsals that bring the voices of teachers, students, and parents into the conversation (Horn & Kane, 2015). Such elaboration promotes productive participation, or “re-visioning” of practice, that has the potential to disrupt reifying talk about students and families and support teachers in realizing the design paradigm (Altman & Oslund, 2015; Horn, 2005; Wenger, 1998).

**Artifacts.** In my study, I used artifacts of teacher-family communication to prompt and facilitate conversations that were productive for teacher learning. Artifacts are particularly relevant to teacher-family communication practice as much of this communication is conducted
asynchronously through written or digital channels. I focused on artifacts that were explicitly designed for teacher-family communication, such as newsletters or handouts during parent workshops. However, I also aimed to facilitate reflection on artifacts that were part of the implicit communication practice with families such as homework and bulletin boards.

Therefore, in my study I sought to develop an intervention that would support teachers’ professional development while strengthening the infrastructure for them to discuss this with their colleagues in the PLC. Given the goal of the intervention, I needed to consider the nature of the professional learning context that facilitate attention to processes and metafunctions of teacher-family communication.

**Inquiry Approach**

Shared inquiry can support teachers in developing a critically reflective stance on their communication practice (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010; McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005; Raphael, Vasquez, Fortune, Gavelek, & Au, 2014). Through shared reflection and dialogue, individuals can appropriate new ways of thinking about their role in relationship to families. In their communicative practices and interactions with families the learning might be transformed. Ultimately, the transformed practices can be made public and become conventionalized in the school.

An inquiry approach involves cycles of systematic research to investigate a central question. The research and discussion are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the inquiry provides opportunities for teacher talk for imagining and reimagining the principles, constructs, and beliefs that guide teachers’ work. Practice-wise, inquiry provides teachers opportunities in which they can “identify elements of their practice that are unexamined, and portions of their professional knowledge which had been previously been tacit (Levine, 2010, p.
The inquiry approach facilitates teachers’ development of knowledge-of-practice with a reciprocal relationship between theory and practice in that reflection on practice shapes teachers’ theoretical frameworks they use to make decisions and helps connect their work to larger issues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted theory and research that informed my study. I reviewed paradigms of school, literacy, teachers, and families and introduced my theoretical framework of social semiotics. I discussed the affordances of design methodology. I described the goal of the intervention: to facilitate teachers’ knowledge development of communication design so as to engage diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development. Finally, I discussed collaborative inquiry in the PLC as the intervention means. In chapters 4 and 5 I return to these ideas to examine the intervention and the participating teachers’ knowledge-of-practice.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I explain the methods I used to answer three guiding research questions:

1. How did teachers demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication upon entering the intervention?
2. How did teachers demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication during participation in the inquiry cycle?
3. What key features were necessary to integrate inquiry about teacher-family communication into the ecology of the PLC?

The chapter is organized in four sections, describing: (a) context and participants, (b) the formative design methodology which I relate to goal and design principles, (c) data sources, and (d) stages of data collection and analytic methods.

Context

The School & Community

My study was conducted at Fisher Elementary School (a pseudonym), located in an urban neighborhood in a large Midwest city serving primarily a Latino population. The neighborhood has amenities and challenges typical of many urban neighborhoods. On one hand, it is a vibrant cultural center for the Latino community with art, food, and shops, while on the other, it ranks high on the hardship index for its crowded housing and poverty rates. According to the U.S. 2012 census community survey data, the per capita income of the neighborhood was $16,444 with 25.8% of households below the federal poverty line and 40.7% of adults without a high school diploma. The neighborhood faces issues such as gangs, food insecurity, and pollution. It benefits from a long history of neighborhood activism and social services including medical clinics, food pantries and soup kitchens, immigration resource centers, early intervention and
after school programs, and affordable housing initiatives. In an interview, one of the teachers remarked that most incoming students have been involved in one or more of these programs.

Fisher Elementary’s 41 teachers served students in PreK-5th grade students during the 2014-2015 school year. Of the 589 students, 92% qualified for free or reduced lunch and 95% identified as Hispanic. Most students live within a few block radius of the school, but the school also serves students from across the city in its regional program for deaf and hard of hearing students. Fisher is situated in two buildings. The original building was built in the late 1800’s and houses Head Start Pre-K and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade classes. The north building was built in the 1970’s and contains the kindergarten, 4th, and 5th grade classes, and houses the offices of the principal and literacy coach. Both buildings have dedicated rooms for parent activities on the main floor.

Fisher has long tradition of cultural outreach and parent education. Like many of the buildings in the neighborhood, the school is adorned with public art created by former students and staff. Murals of Aztec history cover the hallways and a collection of mosaics of leaders decorate the façade of the north building. The school hosts monthly parent workshops to support families in supporting their children in school, and offers classes for parents including GED, computer classes, and English as a Second Language. The Local School Council offers brings together parents, teachers, and community members together to participate in school governance. The Bilingual Advisory and the Parent Advisory Committees involve parents in school decision making related to bilingual program and curriculum and instruction.

History of Reform

I chose Fisher Elementary because it had an existing infrastructure for literacy-focused school improvement. The current principal, Teresa Acosta, made literacy instruction has been a
The Fisher teachers stood out from other schools I had considered because of their agency in driving collaborative conversations about teaching and learning. The instructional leaders who accompanied the teams (i.e., coaches, bilingual lead teachers, and administrators) offered knowledge, resource, and logistical support, but the teachers were the decision makers. Further, Fisher had a well-developed infrastructure for collaboration; teams met weekly and time on professional development days was protected for grade-level team and vertical team collaboration. It was not only the existence of this infrastructure that made Fisher stand out; it was the fact that they appeared to really live it. In my work with the teachers, I observed that the routines of collaboration fostered teacher to teacher communication about teaching and learning, and my conversation with my hair stylist highlighted the potential connection of these routines to teachers’ communication with families.

The school has a transitional bilingual program for native Spanish speakers and a monolingual English program. Students are enrolled in the bilingual program when: 1) parents indicated that a language other than English was spoken in the home and 2) students demonstrated limited English proficiency on the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment. During 2014-2015, 60% of the student body were identified as Limited English Proficient students and serviced by the bilingual program. In kindergarten, bilingual students are instructed primarily in
Spanish with English language development (ELD) instruction. By 4th grade, most students in the bilingual program are instructed in English with ESL and native language support as needed. However, both bilingual and monolingual teachers teach students who speak Spanish to some degree and communicate with families whose primary language was Spanish.

Participants

Since grade level teams are the primary place where teachers learn and work collaboratively, I recruited a primary and an intermediate grade level team to participate, rather than individual teachers. These two groups represent two levels on the developmental spectrum and capture differences potentially attributed to students’ age levels in elementary school. I recruited an instructional leader to include representation of school leadership. The teachers from the kindergarten (N=3) and 4th grade (N=3) teams and one of the schools two literacy coaches agreed to participate in the study. In addition, the principal participated in initial session and one interview. A special education teacher participated occasionally (i.e., 2 4th grade sessions). Table 1 provides an overview of the ethnic background, language proficiency, professional experience, and education of the participants; all names are pseudonyms. All 8 participants were women. 6 self-identified as Latina and spoke fluent Spanish. Participating teachers were experienced and well qualified; all had at least 3 years of teaching experience with multiple licenses and endorsements, and most held a Master’s Degree.

While I did not intend to recruit teachers of particular cultural and linguistic backgrounds, 6 of the 8 participants were cultural insiders to community and a seventh participant, Meaghan, had immigrated from China. The teachers’ personal background and identity influenced their pedagogical views and existing practices engaging with families and the community (de la Luz Reyes & Garza, 2005). However, while all 8 participants were motivated to support families in
the community they varied in the degree and manner they engaged with the community and their balancing of other personal and professional expectations (Adair et al., 2012).

At the time of the study, the three kindergarten teachers were in their third year of working together as a grade level team, and Gabriela and Meaghan had been on the kindergarten team together for seven years. All three kindergarten classes were taught as a full-day, self-contained program. Alicia and Gabriela both instructed in Spanish and worked very closely together, while Meaghan instructed in English. As the only English-instruction classroom in kindergarten, Meaghan had almost double the number of students (30 compared to 18 in each bilingual) and was more isolated in her planning. The kindergarten team had one formal grade level meeting each week with the primary grade literacy coach, but met less formally almost every day during their prep periods. The meeting with the coach involved professional learning related to schoolwide literacy initiatives. The other meetings focused on collaboratively planning the quarterly unit of instruction. The units were organized around content area topics (e.g., the five senses), but the skills and mini-lessons in the units were driven by the Reading 3D assessment. The other aspects of the literacy curriculum: word study, ESL, and writing were planned and taught independently which varied according to the needs of the classroom and the teaching styles of the three teachers (Informal Interview, 6/12/15).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnic Background &amp; Language</th>
<th>Professional Experience</th>
<th>Education &amp; Licensure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gabriela Diaz</td>
<td>Native of Columbia with native bilingual proficiency in Spanish</td>
<td>Kindergarten bilingual teacher, 8 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Master’s Degree in Bilingual Education. Licensed bilingual teacher and an ESL endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Martinez</td>
<td>Native of Mexico with native bilingual proficiency in Spanish</td>
<td>Kindergarten bilingual teacher, 3 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Licensed bilingual teacher and an ESL endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaghan Chin</td>
<td>Native of China with proficiency in Cantonese and Mandarin</td>
<td>Kindergarten monolingual teacher, 13 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Master’s degree in curriculum and instruction and an ESL endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Wilhelm</td>
<td>Of European descent</td>
<td>4th grade monolingual teacher, 8 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Master’s degree in education and licensed to teach math, business, social studies, and ESL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna Luna</td>
<td>Of Mexican descent with professional working fluency in Spanish</td>
<td>4th grade bilingual teacher with 22 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Master's Degree in reading and licensed to teach reading, social studies, ESL, transitional bilingual, and Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Vitelli</td>
<td>Native of Mexico and native bilingual proficiency in Spanish</td>
<td>4th grade bilingual teacher with 11 years of teaching experience</td>
<td>Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction and had an ESL endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Rodriguez</td>
<td>Of Puerto Rican descent Native bilingual proficiency in Spanish</td>
<td>Literacy coach for intermediate grades. 6 years coaching experience in addition to 11 years teaching experience</td>
<td>Master’s degree in reading, National Board Certification in Elementary Grades, licensed reading specialist, and endorsements in ESL and bilingual teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Acosta</td>
<td>Of Mexican descent, Native bilingual proficiency in Spanish</td>
<td>Principal for 11 years. in addition to 15 years’ experience as a middle school and bilingual lead teacher</td>
<td>Master’s degree in bilingual and multicultural education and a second master’s in educational administration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the 2014-15 school year, Sally, Susanna, and Victoria were in the first year working together as a 4th grade team, but had all participated in the same structures in other grade levels within the school. Susanna had previously taught fifth grade for 13 years and Sally had taught in another school, but had been at Fisher for one year teaching second grade. The 4th grade team had weekly meetings with the literacy coach, Rebecca, where the coach facilitated professional learning related to schoolwide literacy initiatives. The team also met at least one other prep period a week to plan for their unit-based comprehension instruction. Victoria had been teaching 4th grade the longest and had the most familiarity with the curriculum. Sally also served as the 4th grade representative on the school’s Instructional Leadership Team.

The comprehension instruction was the only part of the curriculum that the team collaboratively planned and attempted to teach in parallel content and form. The other aspects of the literacy curriculum; word study and guided reading were planned and taught independently which varied according to the needs of the classroom and the teaching styles of the three teachers. The rest of the day was departmentalized and the 4th grade students switched between the three teachers; Susanna taught writing and social studies, Sally taught math, and Victoria taught science.

At the time of the study, Rebecca had been working at Fisher for 17 years. Over her tenure, she had taught both primary and intermediate grades. She had been in her role as a coach for 6 years. In that role, she served as a literacy coach, interventionist, and a member of the administrative team. As a coach, she facilitated weekly grade level team meetings for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers. In these meetings she facilitated job-embedded professional development related to the school improvement goals such as data analysis, guided reading and small group
instruction. As an interventionist, she provided small-group intensive reading support to students who were identified as not making sufficient progress in reading.

Design Experiment Methodology

I employed qualitative methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2011) to conduct a design experiment; I analyzed teachers’ knowledge-of-practice upon entering and during participation in the intervention (Plomp, 2007) and developed features of the intervention. In this section, I discuss rubric which explicates how I operationalized the goal of the intervention. Then, I discuss the guiding principles of the intervention and their initial design.

Goal of the Intervention

My study was oriented towards a specific goal: to facilitate opportunities for teachers to demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of communication design so as to engage diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development. The metafunctions and dimensions of knowledge-of-practice of communication design are manifested in the communication sequence discussed in chapter 2 and depicted in Figure 6.

In Appendix A, I lay out a rubric that explicates the metafunctions and dimensions of knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication theoretically necessary to engage diverse families as partners in literacy learning and development. The teachers represent messages about literacy teaching and learning and stances towards families internally and in their collaborative talk. When these messages and stances are communicated to families, dimensions of design and context can facilitate or inhibit the communication of the intended messages and stances. Teachers can deepen their knowledge-of-practice by intentionally considering the dimensions of design (mode, directionality, and organization) and the context of communication (navigation to communication channel, context of other communication, and frequency).
I used the rubric as a guide for implementation. During implementation, the rubric was not shared with the participating teachers in rubric form, but its concepts were embedded in supports throughout the intervention including handouts and two professional texts (See Appendix B for examples and description of the books.) For example, the dimension Navigation to the Communication Channel is introduced through questions for reflection: “Where do families need or want to use it? Where do families get it?” (Figure 30). In my explanation of my retrospective data analysis methods, I describe how I used the rubric during analysis later in this chapter,

**Design Principles**

In a design experiment, the intervention is defined by design principles which are being tested as viable means to reach the intended goal (Reeves, 2006). These principles, or essential elements, are open to modification and development, but no modification can eliminate them (Colwell, 2012; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). Grounded in the literature discussed in chapter 2, my study was designed around two design principles:

1. Integration into the ecology of the PLC and
2. Collaborative inquiry about teacher-family communication design.

In design experiments, researchers use the extant literature to develop an initial plan for how the design principles will work during the intervention (Ivey & Broaddus, 2007; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). In the next sections, I describe the initial plan for the design principles and discuss a rubric which served as a logic model for the goal of the intervention. In chapter 4, I discuss the results of my iterative and ongoing analysis where I examined how these principles were manifested in the features of the intervention.
Integration into the Ecology of the PLC. The degree to which new learning is integrated into the PLC is an important factor in whether the learning will be sustained. I sought to integrate my intervention into the ecology of the PLC both in its infrastructure and its focus. Infrastructure is an important foundation in a PLC as it creates the opportunities and routines for collaboration (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). When well established, the collaboration can foster sustained, embedded opportunities for teachers learn about their practice to learn (Horn & Little, 2010). Therefore, I arranged to work with the teachers in their existing structures for collaboration (grade level teams) and within their embedded professional learning time (prep period, lunchtime, and before or after school).

I also worked to align the intervention’s goals with the focus of the schoolwide literacy reform work. The more coherent the focus of reform efforts, the more likely they are to achieve positive outcomes for students (Huffman et al., 2014; Newmann et al., 2001). I structured initial discussion topics and reflection questions to elicit discussion about the focus of the school’s curriculum mapping and vertical teaming efforts.

Collaborative Inquiry about Teacher-Family Communication Design. Collaborative inquiry cycles were designed as focused, recursive processes to examine practice (Sagor, 2005). My initial design of the inquiry cycle was grounded in teacher action research (Pappas & Zecker, 2001) and informed by the logic of the communication design sequence (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kress, 2009). The collaborative inquiry took a forward-looking orientation in that it sought to engineer new possibilities for communication through design, rather than strictly reflecting and analyzing existing practices. In this way, the inquiry aligned with traditions of teacher inquiry that focus on planning for new practice, such as lesson study (Fernandez, 2002; Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2003).
Figure 8 illustrates my initial theoretical model of inquiry about teacher-family communication. The model is derived from the teacher-family communication design sequence described in chapter 2 (see Figure 6). My initial model included 4 types of activities to support teachers’ development of knowledge-of-practice. One type of activity was designed as a support to propel inquiry (i.e., (re)imagining). Three types of activities were related to phases of an inquiry cycle (i.e., designing, enacting, and reflecting & analyzing). I anticipated that the phases would occur recursively during collaborative sessions over the course of a macrocycle to reach the goals of the inquiry.

Next, I briefly describe the kinds of activities I anticipated would support teachers’ engagement in each support or phases during collaborative sessions. At the end of this section, I describe the anticipated composition of the macrocycle of inquiry. In chapter 5, I describe the final theoretical design of the model, including activities related to the phases of inquiry and additional supports to propel inquiry (See Figure 26.)

**Figure 8. Initial Model of Inquiry about Teacher-Family Communication Design**

(Re)Imagining. The objective of the (re)imagining activities were to develop shared knowledge and perspectives about teacher-family communication design sequence and identify the focus and goals of inquiry (Pappas & Zecker, 2001). During (re)imagining activities, I
introduced theory and research about the key concepts of the intervention including dialogue, communicating what’s important in literacy, visual design, and frequency of communication. These activities were intended to be lecture and reading, writing, and discussion about key ideas. The concepts of the (re)imagining phases were developed in advance of the intervention, while the delivery methods were tailored and developed based on participant responses in each session.

**Designing.** The designing phase was intended to be the heart of the intervention. In the design phase, the teachers and I co-constructed a plan for teacher-family communication. Through collaborative talk, teachers represented their intended messages about literacy and stances. The design phase was intended to incorporate brainstorming and planning of the design and context that would effectively communicate the intended messages and stances. I supported teachers in designing family feedback that could be used to reflect on the effectiveness of the communication and inform future iterations of designs.

**Enacting.** The enacting phase was intended to occur outside our collaborative inquiry time. In this phase, the teachers engaged in the teacher-family communication that was (re)imagined and designed in the collaborative inquiry sessions. Teachers captured their impressions of face-to-face communication or distributed print communication. The teachers sought verbal or written feedback from families or made observations to assess the degree to which the communication was successful.

**Reflecting & Analyzing.** The reflecting & analyzing phase was intended to focus on analysis of artifacts and instances of particular communication. Teachers used their observations, recollections of the communication implementation and family feedback that had been collected during the communication process. For example, if teachers included a question at the bottom of
a letter to parents, teachers analyzed families’ responses. We also used this phase to reflect on the process of enacting the communication and anything that helped or hindered its enactment.

**Macrocycle of inquiry.** In the initial design, a macrocycle of inquiry was designed to focus on a communication goal and anticipated to occur over 3-5 collaborative sessions with opportunities to enact communication between sessions. In each session, I planned to facilitate activities in support of teachers’ engagement in the inquiry phases. I anticipated that teachers would engage in activities related to multiple phases (e.g., (re)imagining, designing, reflecting & analyzing) of inquiry in each session so that phases of inquiry would occur recursively over the course of a macrocycle.

Figure 9 illustrates how I anticipated inquiry activities might be configured in a macrocycle of three collaborative sessions based on my experience facilitating job-embedded professional learning activities during the school day. I anticipated the initial sessions would focus on inquiry activities related to (re)imagining, introducing new ideas and setting goals, briefly reflecting & analyzing current practice in light of those goals, then designing new communication to work towards them. In between collaborative sessions, the teachers would enact the communication. In the subsequent sessions, inquiry activities would increasingly focus on reflecting & analyzing the effectiveness of the communication and engaging in further design. In chapter 4, I present analysis of the macrocycle configurations as they were implemented in each collaboration context and discuss their similarities and differences in chapter 5.
Throughout the intervention I negotiated dual roles of researcher and facilitator. Collaboration between researcher and practitioner is a fundamental characteristic of formative design (e.g., Ivey & Broaddus, 2007). Therefore, special consideration was given to the “proactive role” (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006) of teachers within the study in order to make modifications that meet their needs as learners and collaborators within and across the iterative cycles of the intervention. I focused my supports and data collection on issues and tasks related to teacher-family communication and literacy teaching and learning. When such other issues arose during our meetings, I refrained from giving input or feedback about topics that were not within the purview of the study (e.g., scheduling or curriculum decisions).

In balancing the roles of facilitator and researcher I aimed to support teachers in a positive manner and to collect valid data; I tried to focus on supporting the teachers and school while minimizing the burdens of data collection. For example, while teachers often promised to email me electronic copies of documents I found it less intrusive to take pictures of the hard
copies on my phone. I was also flexible in scheduling sessions to accommodate busy times of the school year (e.g., mid-quarter grading).

**Data Sources Related to Participants and Contexts**

I collected four data sources related to participants and context. Understanding the participants and context is a critical part of design methodology, so that the intervention can be successfully enacted in an authentic context (Cobb et al., 2003; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). These data were the primary sources for the first research question about participants’ entering knowledge-of-practice. In addition, the contextual artifacts and interviews were used in analysis of the design features, particularly integration into the PLC. The final interviews and surveys were used to triangulate analysis of teachers’ demonstration of knowledge-of-practice in the context of the inquiry.

**Participant Interviews**

Participant interviews offered an insider perspective of the school context and issues related to communicating with families about literacy and offered a measure of participants’ perceptions of growth and suggestions for future iterations of the intervention. The initial interviews gave me an opportunity to get to know participants and the final interviews gave me the opportunity to understand their individual narratives of participation in the intervention more deeply (Riessman, 2002).

The participating teachers and literacy coach were interviewed at the beginning and end of the intervention. The initial interview protocol addressed personal background, conceptions of literacy, beliefs about families, and experiences engaging families. The final interview protocol elicited reflections on literacy teaching and learning throughout school year, beliefs about literacy and families, and reflections on participation in the intervention. At the conclusion of the
project, the principal participated in a formal interview about her background and experience, the
history of family engagement and literacy reform at the school, beliefs about literacy and families, and reflections on the intervention. The initial interviews lasted approximately 25
minutes, while the final interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes. The principal interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. See Appendix C for interview protocols.

**Participant Contextual Artifacts**

I collected artifacts related to two dimensions of practice: artifacts related to instructional practice and entering teacher-family communication practice. These data provided insight into the instructional foci of the teachers and aspects of teaching and learning potentially visible or invisible to families. In May and June, at the end of the intervention, I asked the coach and teachers to give me guided tours where I could explicitly take photos of various artifacts in context and elicit a description from the participants. The literacy coach gave me a guided tour of the school and artifacts in public spaces that families might encounter including bulletin boards, murals, and a station with brochures for families. I asked each teacher to do the same in her classroom and captured both pictures and descriptions of the classroom environment and teachers’ perceptions of how families might encounter it.

Whenever possible, I requested electronic or paper copies of artifacts from teachers. However, I frequently used both video and still cameras to create a record of artifacts and, in some cases, capture them in their context. I also used field notes and transcripts to identify and describe artifacts. In total, I documented more than 200 contextual artifacts.

**Pre- and Post- Surveys**

I used a structured survey as an additional data source of teachers’ individual articulation of their beliefs and practice related to family engagement and literacy. The survey helped me to
understand teachers’ entering practice and stance, and I administered the survey before and after the intervention to capture any changes in teachers’ description of their practice. Five teachers and the literacy coach completed pre- and post-surveys; the principal completed the survey 1 time. The survey was adapted from two validated instruments that had been used by researchers (Epstein & Salinas, 1993; Lenski, Wham, & Griffey, 1998) to guide family and literacy-related professional development. See Appendix D for the survey instrument.

The family engagement section was adapted with permission from the School and Family Partnership Teacher Questionnaire (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). I used the questions that addressed four areas related to the study: (a) beliefs and opinions of family engagement; (b) teachers’ existing communication practices; (c) teachers’ value of family involvement activities; and (d) teachers’ perception of family engagement in the school. I used this measure to triangulate findings from the initial and final interviews about teacher-family communication practice.

The literacy and literacy instruction section was adapted from the Literacy Orientation Survey ((LOS) Lenski et al., 1998). The LOS assesses the theoretical orientation of teachers’ beliefs about literacy learning and classroom practices, and was designed to distinguish between constructivist orientations and traditionalist orientations. I used this measure as a further data point to understand how teachers conceptualized and practiced literacy in the classroom, and to identify which beliefs and practices are most aligned with the design paradigm (i.e., constructivist).

The original LOS survey includes four questions focused on engaging families in literacy (two belief and two practice questions). I substituted these four questions with four questions designed to assess beliefs and practices around new literacies and technology to avoid redundancy with the family engagement section and to understand how broadly teachers
conceptualized and practiced literacy in the classroom. I validated the new questions with teachers from another school setting before implementing them in this study.

**Background Survey**

The background section provided a structured method for systematically obtaining detailed information about participants. The survey consisted of two sections: education and experience and demographics. The background survey was included at the end of the pre-survey and administered online. 5 teachers, the literacy coach, and the principal completed the background survey. See Appendix E for the background survey instrument.

**Data Sources Related to Collaborative Inquiry**

The collaborative inquiry sessions were at the heart of my study. In design methodology terms, they were the space and time where the learning processes and processes supporting that learning were evident (Cobb et al., 2003). I had three key data sources related to collaborative inquiry: session recordings and transcripts, instances of teacher-family communication, and my researcher journal.

**Session Audio Recordings & Transcripts**

As the facilitator of the collaborative inquiry sessions, I could not take thorough field notes during sessions so I relied on audio recordings to capture the full details of each session. All 19 sessions were audio-recorded and an effort was made to video record as many sessions as possible. I transcribed all collaborative talk related to literacy, families, and teacher-family communication across all sessions. Transcriptions were organized by turns of talk, defined as changes in speaker. The starting time of each turn of talk was noted in the transcript. In total, 9 hours and 55 minutes of collaboration were recorded and transcribed.
Instances of Teacher-Family Communication: Artifacts & Observations

Print artifacts of teacher-family communication were an important data source in this study. During intervention sessions, teachers had opportunities to create both handwritten and electronic documents. Following sessions, I scanned paper documents and archived electronic documents with the participant name and date of collection. I also kept a log with a brief description of the artifacts and linked to the artifacts when they were referenced in the transcript. Participants completed written reflections at the end of the first three sessions. This method was helpful in capturing feedback about the process and initial understandings of the new content that was addressed while meeting as a larger group and building rapport. As the work moved into smaller group sessions and rapport was established, I discontinued the written reflections and focused on capturing the artifacts of teacher-family communication that were designed and developed in the session. These included documents such as newsletters to families and invitations to parent workshops. The 4th grade team collaboratively designed 4 artifacts and the kindergarten team and the literacy coach design 3 artifacts respectively.

At the start of the intervention, the kindergarten team had established regular parent workshops, and I structured their grade-level’s collaborative inquiry around the communication occurring in these workshops. In total, I conducted 6 formal observations of kindergarten teachers interacting with families: 4 classroom-level parent workshops, 1 all kindergarten parent workshop, and the kindergarten graduation. Observational field notes were the primary source of data for the contextual observations. Field notes focused on the following questions: What are teachers, leaders, and families doing and saying when they are interacting? What are they trying to accomplish? How exactly (i.e., through which semiotic modes) do they do this? (adapted from
Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Field notes were handwritten and then typed to facilitate analysis.

**Researcher journal**

Throughout the project, I recorded 23 entries in a researcher journal. The researcher journal served three purposes. First, the researcher journal was an important part of the iterative analysis process of my design methodology. Typically, design experiments structure regular debriefing meetings between the researcher and teacher to analyze implementation with students and make modifications as necessary (e.g., Ivey & Broaddus, 2007; Yaden Jr & Tam, 2000). I used the researcher journal for me to personally debrief, note any emerging impressions or themes about what was enhancing or inhibiting participant learning. In essence, the researcher journal became an audit trail of my decision-making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, I used the journal to reflect on my own experiences and stance as the designer and implementer of the intervention. In the project I balanced several variants of reflexivity (Finlay, 2002) as I negotiated my position as researcher, professional development provider, and co-learner, and the journal was an important tool in which to reflect on these roles after each session. For example, after the first introductory session I wrote “It feels like there is so much is left to unpack and clarify. Is this something that I should be up front about? We’re working to actually unpack how this works?” (Researcher Journal, 1/15/15). Third, I used the researcher journal to capture reflections about communication that occurred with teachers via email in between sessions, and to capture any notes and reflections from informal observations. These included observations staff and families in the school office or at dismissal and the culture of the school in various spaces such as the hallways and lunch room.
Stages of Data Collection & Analysis

Stage 1: Entering the Context, Recruiting Participants, & Gathering Baseline Data

As discussed in Chapter 1, stage 1 began in 2012, two years before the current study when I worked with teachers from Fisher in a professional development project sponsored by the district (Koning, Houghtby, Izard, & Schuler, 2014; Raphael et al., 2014). Through the project I built relationships with the teachers and principal and witnessed the school’s infrastructure for literacy-focused school improvement. In July of 2014, I contacted the principal, Teresa Acosta, about the goals of the project. Teresa felt strongly about the importance and need for the study and agreed to commit because, “We cannot be successful without parent involvement and parent engagement. This was another opportunity for [the teachers] to refine those skills and another opportunity for them to reflect” (Teresa, Interview, 7/1/15).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, I recruited grade level teams from primary level (K) and one intermediate levels (4) and a literacy coach. This grouping allowed me to work within the existing structure for professional collaboration at Fisher (grade level teams), and represented two points on the developmental spectrum. After receiving approval from the IRB (see Appendix G) and the district research review board, I began recruiting teachers to participate. Working with grade level teams allowed me to work within a microcosm of the PLC. All regular education teachers from both kindergarten and 4th grade teams and one literacy coach agreed to participate.

I conducted baseline interviews and surveys from the teachers during December 2014 and January 2015. The interviews and surveys allowed me to better understand teachers’ existing communication practice and attitudes towards families and family engagement as I planned for our initial collaborative inquiry sessions. The interviews also allowed for teachers to
Stage 2: Implement and Adapt Intervention based on Iterative Data Analysis

The intervention occurred during stage 2 which occurred between January 2015 and June 2015. I conducted two introductory sessions with all 7 participants and the principal during lunchtime sessions. The objective of these sessions was to provide an in depth explanations into the project goals and identify goals for the first macrocycle of inquiry. The introductory sessions were structured as lectures and opportunities for individual reflection and whole group share out. The sessions were conducted as working lunch sessions over the lunch break.

After the second session, the teachers requested that we hold the sessions during grade level prep periods instead of lunchtime, providing 50-minute meetings instead of 35-minute meetings. As the two grade levels had different prep periods, I scheduled separate meeting times with each grade level team. The literacy coach, Rebecca, supported the intermediate grades so she chose to attend the 4th grade sessions initially. In March Rebecca and I decided to plan to meet separately to facilitate her communication with her intervention students. Table 2 summarizes the number of sessions conducted with each group.

Table 2. Intervention Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Sessions</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Minutes of Engagement</th>
<th>Inquiry Cycle Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>2 sessions</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>78 minutes</td>
<td>2 reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>7 sessions</td>
<td>February-May 2015</td>
<td>280 minutes</td>
<td>4 print communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>5 sessions</td>
<td>February – May 2015</td>
<td>182 minutes</td>
<td>Parent Workshops (4 small group workshops, 1 all kindergarten workshop) 2 print communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As I implemented the intervention with the teachers, I engaged in ongoing reflection and iterative analysis. After each session, I wrote in my researcher journal and recorded my personal reactions and any emerging themes. I reflected on factors that were enhancing or inhibiting integration of the intervention into the PLC and evidence of teachers’ communication practice and knowledge-of-practice. I also reviewed the audio recordings and participant artifacts from the sessions and recorded memos in my journal. I also took time in each session to share emerging themes and interpretations with the teachers, as well as to brainstorm the most suitable and productive next steps.

During the iterative analysis phase, I created a catalogue of the data. I used an Excel spreadsheet to record each of the sessions and related data collected. I also kept a separate contextual artifact log which organized and labeled photographs, scans, and electronic copies of contextual artifacts related to teachers’ classroom and teacher-family communication practice that was not a focus in the inquiry cycles. The results of these iterative analyses formed the foundation and direction for the retrospective analysis that occurred in stage 5.

**Stage 3: Final Interviews and Surveys**

Stage 3 occurred in June and July 2015. After the last collaborative inquiry session, I conducted final interviews with each participant and invited them to take the final survey. One of the goals of the final interviews was to serve as a member check where I could share some of my interpretations with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as well as serve as another opportunity for teacher reflection and development of practice (Koelsch, 2013). I also did an informal photo walk through each classroom to capture additional contextual information and
recorded the teachers’ explanations as an informal interview. The literacy coach gave me a tour of the school and provided a parallel explanation for school wide contextual information.

**Stage 4: Retrospective Data Analysis**

Following the conclusion of the intervention, I conducted a retrospective analysis (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006) of data from July 2015 through July 2016. Data were organized and analyzed chronologically by session according to the catalogue I had created in stage 2. My first retrospective pass through the data was to transcribe my audio data. I transcribed the sessions in chronological order; I began with the initial interviews, then the sessions, and concluded with the final interviews. All sessions and interviews were transcribed and the transcripts imported into ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis program. I transcribed virtually the whole corpus of audio, I did not transcribe interruptions or off task discussions, which were minimal.

My second retrospective pass through the data was to delineate macrocycles of the intervention. This process helped me delineate what aspects of the data were directly and indirectly related to the recursive cycles of inquiry, which elements of the data were related to participants’ entering knowledge-of-practice, and which elements of the data provided context about the school. Starting with reflection on my researcher journal, I examined the three inquiry groups (i.e., the kindergarten team, the 4th grade team, and the coach) as embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2009). In each unit of analysis, I analyzed how the structure and the focus of the meetings evolved over time and identified the collaborative sessions that were bounded by an inquiry goal. I triangulated the researcher journal with the transcripts and the artifacts that were created and analyzed within the sessions. I looked for shifts in structure and focus in our collaboration. In total, I identified 5 macrocycles across the three groups. Table 3 summarizes the dates of the sessions of each macrocycle, the goal of the inquiry, and the teacher-family
communication that was designed, reflected on, and/or analyzed. I used the macrocycles to organize the analysis related to my three research questions.

**Table 3. Macrocycle Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Group</th>
<th>Macrocycle</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Macrocycle Goal</th>
<th>Teacher-Family Communication Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/20/15</td>
<td>Analyze the messages communicated in the parent workshops</td>
<td>• Parent Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/10/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent Workshops Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3/25/15</td>
<td>Design a workshop to support home use of online books</td>
<td>• RAZ Kids Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/23/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• RAZ Kids Parent Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/1/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/18/15</td>
<td>Design regular curriculum newsletter to show comprehension skills and strategies</td>
<td>• 3rd Quarter Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/11/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Greek Myth Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/20/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Character Perspective Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/25/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4/24/15</td>
<td>Design regular curriculum newsletter in the context of lesson planning</td>
<td>• Cesar Chavez Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/30/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/20/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/27/15</td>
<td>Design two-way communication about student progress in reading intervention</td>
<td>• QAR Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/24/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring Comprehension Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/8/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Family Dialogue Folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6/1/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Inquiry Activities**

To understand how the inquiry evolved in the three collaborative contexts, I analyzed inquiry activities in the session transcripts for inquiry support or phase. First, I identified episodes of inquiry phase in the transcript. Episodes were defined as talk related to inquiry about teacher-family communication, including talk about communication, families, and literacy teaching and learning. Episodes were delineated by shifts in the purpose of our collaborative activity. Talk that was unrelated to the inquiry was excluded. After summarizing what happened
in each episode, I coded each episode using the definitions of inquiry phase discussed earlier in this chapter for (re)imagining, designing, and reflecting and analyzing. During coding, two additional supports for inquiry emerged: developing and planning for collaboration. The developing phase occurred in three sessions: twice for fourth grade and once for kindergarten. For both teams, I provided development support when a design for teacher-family communication was not enacted after two design sessions. The development phase scaffolded teachers in executing designs and accessing resources such as paper, technology troubleshooting, and translation. The planning for collaboration phase occurred in ten sessions. This phase was logistical and involved reviewing the calendar and upcoming school schedule to identify dates and times to collaborate, as well as finalizing dates and times to enact communication.

After identifying and coding the episodes, I created an episode catalog in Excel. The catalog included the support and phase codes, macrocycles, the collaboration context, the session number, the date. I used the start and end time of each segment to calculate the total segment time and its percentage of the session. The catalog was uploaded into Tableau Visualization software to compare engagement in phases of inquiry across the macrocycles in the three collaborative contexts.

**Analysis of Teachers’ Demonstration of Knowledge-of-Practice**

I analyzed instances of teacher-family communication and teacher talk about those instances to address my first two research questions: (a) How did teachers demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication upon entering the intervention? And (b) How did teachers demonstrate knowledge of teacher-family communication during participation in the inquiry cycle?
First, I identified instances of teacher-family communication practice in the data set, including artifacts, observations, and replays of communication between teacher and families. Then I analyzed the transcript to find teacher talk about that communication practice and messages about literacy and stances towards families and students. I analyzed all instances of focal communication within the cycles of inquiry (i.e., those listed in Table 3.) I selected one instance of communication to analyze entering knowledge-of-practice which had sufficient related teacher talk for full analysis. I triangulated the analysis of this instance with other instances of entering knowledge-of-practice.

I used the rubric as a framework to analyze the messages, stance, design, and context of the communication. I used the communication as a recursive frame to examine the teacher talk. First, I analyzed the teacher talk to identify the messages and stances teachers intended to represent. Then I analyzed how messages and stances were communicated in each dimension of the design and context of the communication.

I analyzed each dimension as a spectrum, but did not attempt to assign structured ratings to positions on the spectrum. For example, for the design dimension of directionality, a space for a parent signature was considered less “two-way” than an open-ended box for parent’s observation of reading behaviors. After rating all the instances of communication, I re-read the transcripts to identify any evidence that would contradict my analysis and adjusted accordingly. In chapter 4 I explain the results of this analysis for each team.

Analysis of Intervention Features

I used the lens of the professional learning community categorize and code for issues related to integrating the intervention into the ecology of the PLC to identify features of the intervention. Specifically, I coded deductively using a framework of core issues in the
professional learning community (Morrissey, 2000; Stoll et al., 2006): organizational infrastructure, focus of improvement work, contextual issues, and personal & social dynamics. I began by coding the transcript from each session and then coded the researcher journal, the survey, and interview data, and field notes which led to further refinement of the codes. This led to the development of a total of 9 selective codes across 4 categories.

Table 4. Categories and Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Infrastructure</td>
<td>Meeting structures</td>
<td>PLC group composition and purpose</td>
<td>Weekly planning meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calendar issues</td>
<td>Administrative deadlines and meetings</td>
<td>Online gradebook upload deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Routines T-F</td>
<td>Practices by which teachers communicate with families</td>
<td>Dismissal conversations with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of Improvement Work</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>The scale of focus of conversation or communication, ranged from global to specific skill</td>
<td>Objectives for the quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curricular Focus</td>
<td>Focus among teachers could be shared or not</td>
<td>Word study routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Issues</td>
<td>School Contextual Issues</td>
<td>Issues of poverty, language, immigration within the school community; relationship of staff and families.</td>
<td>Limited numbers of copies each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Contextual Issues</td>
<td>Issues related to district, state, and federal policies, including standards and assessments.</td>
<td>District testing and data reporting requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Social Dynamics</td>
<td>Personal Background</td>
<td>Personal and professional experience of individual participants</td>
<td>Proficiency in Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Background</td>
<td>History of grade level team’s collaboration</td>
<td>Length of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, I engaged in a second stage of axial analysis (Saldaña, 2011) in which I examined the challenges in light of the supports of the intervention. The process helped me narrow my list to four core challenges were present in the Fisher context and corresponding features. I took
another pass through the data to code for evidence of the features across the three groups’ inquiry cycles. Table 6 depicts a summary of features evident in each cycle of inquiry. In Chapter 4, I explicate the findings from this analysis.

**Table 5. Key Features of the Intervention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Features of the Intervention</th>
<th>Core Challenges Addressed</th>
<th>Original Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Coupling Inquiry with the School Rhythm | Time to Fulfill Professional Responsibilities | • Organizational Structure  
• Contextual Issues |
| Supporting Design through Development | Accessing Resources for Teacher-Family Communication | • Organizational Structure  
• Social Dynamic  
• Contextual Issues |
| Showing, not Telling Messages | Articulating Practice and Purpose | • Focus of School Improvement Work  
• Contextual Issues |
| Incorporating Family Feedback | Accommodating and Incorporating Families | • Organizational Structure  
• Focus of Improvement Work |

**Table 6. Key Features Across the Macrocycles of Inquiry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Features of the Intervention</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade</th>
<th>Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupling Inquiry with the School Rhythm</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Design through Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing, not Telling Messages</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating Family Feedback</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In chapter 3, I presented an overview of the research context, methods, data sources, and stages of data collection and analysis. In this chapter I present the results of the analysis of data collected before, during, and after implementation of the collaborative inquiry with teachers in one PLC. In this section, I explain the structure of the chapter and preview the findings.

This chapter is organized as three narratives of inquiry, one for each team. Throughout the intervention I encouraged teachers to provide input about the structure and focus of the inquiry, and, as discussed in chapter 3, the teachers requested that we conduct our collaborative inquiry as grade level teams during their prep period. This shift resulted in two collaboration contexts: the kindergarten team and the 4th grade team. While the coach initially joined the 4th grade team, she and I made the decision to meet separately, forming a third collaboration context.

During analysis, I identified features in common across all the inquiry collaborations, but natural contrasts between the teachers and their inquiry also emerged. In this chapter I do not intend to focus on a comparison between the groups, but their differences allow me to highlight variation in knowledge-of-practice and its interplay within the trajectory of each inquiry. The narrative of the three inquiry collaborations also reveals the progression of my own thinking and analysis. For these reasons, the chapter is organized in a particular order: first, the 4th grade team, then the coach, and, finally, the kindergarten team.

Throughout the intervention, the 4th grade team was the most “textbook” case to analyze. The team faced the kinds of challenges that I had anticipated and they designed communication that closely adhered to the supports I provided. They had limited teacher-family communication practice in place upon entering the intervention, and showed evidence of deepening their
knowledge-of-practice during the intervention. My work with the 4th grade helped me to articulate the supports and features necessary that I had envisioned in planning the study.

The work with the coach spun from the work with the 4th grade team. Her inquiry focused on print communication, but her high level of engagement and small number of students allowed the inquiry to go deeper into analysis of parent’s feedback. Our collaboration occurred in one-on-one sessions. In one sense, the collaborative process of making design decisions was simplified because there was no need for a group to come to consensus. However, the coach’s expertise about literacy instruction and her drive to advocate for families made these sessions more complex as each session proved to be an opportunity for extended reflection, analysis, and dialogue.

Finally, the work with the kindergarten team was the most surprising. Their existing teacher-family communication practices were more extensive then I had thought I would encounter in the intervention. As I supported the kindergarten teachers in the inquiry process, their knowledge-of-practice also pushed my own thinking (and supports) and helped me to more clearly develop and articulate my framework for teacher-family communication.

I structured each team’s section to present analysis related to my three research questions:
1. How did teachers demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication upon entering the intervention?
2. How did teachers demonstrate knowledge of teacher-family communication during participation in the inquiry cycle?
3. What key features were necessary to integrate inquiry about teacher-family communication into the ecology of the PLC?
First, I analyze the team’s entering knowledge-of-practice (Research Question 1). I identified instances of existing teacher-family communication practice in interviews and surveys and artifacts and analyzed teacher talk to examine teachers’ knowledge-of-practice about those practices. Next, I analyze the macrocycles of inquiry for each team by examining the transcripts of the sessions, instances of teacher-family communication (i.e., artifacts and observations of face-to-face communication, and my researcher journal. In the narrative of each macrocycle, I analyze the focal communication that teachers analyzed or designed, and the related teacher talk (Research Question 2). I analyze the features of the intervention I used to support the teams in dealing with the challenges they encountered during implementation (Research Question 3). Finally, I conclude with a summative analysis of the team’s knowledge-of-practice entering the intervention and during participation (Research Questions 1 and 2). In my discussion of the findings in chapter 5, I interpret the analysis by synthesizing the findings across the three inquiry collaborations.

**The 4th Grade Team**

**4th Grade: Entering Knowledge-of-Practice**

Analysis of the initial survey and interview data indicated that the 4th grade team’s existing collective teacher-family communication practice was limited. All three teachers participated in schoolwide routines such as the annual “meet the teacher” night in the fall and conducted parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first and third quarters. I observed that, unlike the kindergarten classrooms, the 4th grade rooms were on the second floor of the building far from the entrance where students entered and were dismissed (Researcher Journal, 1/12/15). The teachers had bulletin boards in the hallways and on their classroom walls, but most parents only caught a glimpse of them a handful of times a year (4th grade room tour, 5/28/15).
The teachers also graded student work, sent it home regularly, and uploaded grades to a district-wide online grade book called the Parent Portal. The administration required the 4th grade teachers to update the grade book by the middle and end of each quarter, but the teachers were unsure of how many 4th grade parents used the portal, “It seems like I don't even know if all the parents really know that they have access” (Susanna, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 3/20/15).

All three teachers assigned homework on a nightly basis. The 4th grade homework was primarily mediated by students and not explicitly directed to families for review. All three teachers had weekly homework routines where students did word sorts as part of the *Words Their Way* curriculum. Susanna and Victoria both assigned worksheets related to the comprehension skills addressed in the unit (Susanna, Final Interview, 6/17/15, Victoria, Final Interview, 6/15/15). Sally was the only teacher who assigned homework in texts from students’ guided reading groups (Sally, Final Interview, 6/11/15).

At the beginning of each quarter, the team collaborated to create a newsletter summarizing the curriculum for the upcoming quarter. For example, the second quarter newsletter was sent in the fall of 2014 and is pictured in Figure 10 below. Susanna described the intended message of the newsletter as “trying to give them, regularly, every quarter, updating them about what we were going to be doing for the year” (Susanna, Initial Interview, 12/18/15). The top of the newsletter features a list of the subjects and the brief list of the topics that will be taught in the quarter. The descriptions use generic verbs such as “working on” (math) and “learn” (science) that do not indicate the kinds of skills and dispositions to be cultivated in the quarter. The organization of the newsletter emphasizes logistics and procedures, with schedules
Figure 10. 4th Grade Second Quarter Newsletter

Fourth Grade Information
2nd Quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Students will read informational texts about Natural Disasters. Students will focus on text structures such as sequence, compare &amp; contrast, and cause and effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Students will be working on unit conversions with metric measurement and problem solving as well as beginning multi digit multiplication and division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Students will learn about Magnets and Electricity. They will build simple circuits, series circuits, and parallel circuits. Additionally, students will build an electromagnet and a telegraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Students will focus on the United States Regions. This will include maps, skills, geography, and climate of each region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Students will write an informative essay using the writing process: Paragraphing, writing conventions, and grammar will be covered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:10</td>
<td>Opening exercises, Math Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10-10:05</td>
<td>Language Arts: Comprehension, Fluency, and Word Knowledge -Words Their Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05-11:05</td>
<td>Music, Gym, Computers, Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:05-11:50</td>
<td>Lunch/recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:55-2:55</td>
<td>Departmentalized Math/Science/Social Studies/Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:55-3:00</td>
<td>Closing Procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room 222 Prep Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Gym</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room 224 Prep Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Gym</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Room 226 Prep Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homework: Your son/daughter is expected to copy their homework assignments in their agendas. Please check his/her agenda daily. A parent’s signature is requested.

Attendance: Please make sure your child arrives on time daily. For absences, please send a written reason stating why your child was absent.

Fourth Grade Team: Ms. , Ms. , (Student Teacher), Mrs. , and Ms. ..
taking up two-thirds of the page, and instructions for parents to sign the homework log nightly and bring their children to school on time every day. The curricular objectives for the core subjects are framed as objectives that students will do, the weekly schedule for physical education, art, music, and computers is framed as the “prep” schedule, shorthand for teacher preparation period, rather than a curriculum-focused title such as enrichment classes. While Susanna described the newsletter as “regular,” to indicate its regularly scheduled enactment, it was only sent to families once every 9-11 weeks without any other direct communication about the curriculum in the interim.

As individuals, the 4th grade teachers’ reflected varied knowledge-of-practice. Sally reported that parent engagement was a “big part” of the curriculum in her teacher certification Master’s degree program, “They said it was great to have a way to engage the parents in the learning as well” (Sally, Initial Interview, 12/17/15). Heeding this advice, she had sent home newsletters to families from her first year teaching. As the 4th grade math teacher, she sent math newsletters to the entire grade three to four times a month. She planned and distributed these independent of her other grade level team members. She also maintained a classroom website that summarized math concepts and provided links to related resources. However, the communication was distributed only in English and she did not have any means in place to determine whether families received the information or how they interpreted it.

In contrast to Sally, Victoria did not send any regular newsletters, but communicated with parents through phone calls, handwritten notes, and she scheduled face-to-face meetings when necessary. She described feeling very comfortable communicating with families:

1 I can relate to my students. Many times I see myself in them. I also learned English as
2 a teenager, not as a child. So I understand the struggles that they go through learning a
new language. And the experiences that they have, they are so similar to mine. The celebrations that they do, we do the same thing. Their favorite food is my favorite food. So we can relate in many different levels. (Victoria, Interview, 12/14/14)

She felt her comfort came from a deep connection to her students’ personal experiences of language learning (lines 1-3) and culture of the community (lines 4-5).

In her initial interview Susanna described her own limited communication with families as an area for improvement. She made phone calls or scheduled meetings with families when there was a concern, but felt there were many barriers to maintaining regular communication. The foremost barrier was the time commitment that communication required including making time to use the phone in the school office to call families and finding mutually convenient times when families’ work schedules aligned with her schedule. Her experience with her own school age son, had highlighted the need and the possibility for more communication, Last year, my son’s teacher was really good about kind of regularly giving an update of what they were going to cover. And I was like, ‘You know, we should do that too’” (Susanna, Initial Interview, 12/18/14).

4th Grade: First Macrocycle of Inquiry

We started our first small-group session and the three teachers and Rebecca, the coach, grappled with the challenge of dialogue and the goal of “chatting like neighbors over the back fence” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003, p. 71):

1 REBECCA: Because I still think there's a disconnect with parents. Not intentionally, but I think that either lack of knowledge or opportunity too. Sometimes when you meet with parents there's a little bit of a time constraint. Especially in report card pick up. It's one parent after another to have that really deep dive conversation.
In this exchange, Rebecca and Victoria introduce two key issues. First, Rebecca mentions that there is an unintentional “disconnect” because parents don’t have the “knowledge or opportunity” to engage in communication with teachers (lines 1 and 2). Second, it takes time to build connections with parents through communication and those times are short (lines 3-4) and need to be nurtured over time (lines 5-8). These two issues became the focus of the first macrocycle: design frequent communications to build families’ knowledge about what was happening in the classroom.

We began working towards those goals by reflecting and analyzing the team’s most recent quarterly newsletter, shown in Figure 11. In our introductory sessions, I had introduced some principles of using images to show, not tell the information. In comparison to the second quarter newsletter (Figure 10), the newsletter shows the content of the unit (Greek Mythology) through a clip-art of Greek god and a description. The teachers then list and define the 6 key story elements they will address in the unit.

Together we analyzed the dimensions of the newsletter using a handout I had prepared (See Figure 29 in Appendix B), and Susanna proposed using images as an area for improvement. In the conversation, I asked them to consider not simply adding more images, but to consider how images could be used to make the classroom learning come alive. When I asked them
Figure 11. 4th Grade Third Quarter Newsletter

LANGUANGE ARTS FOCUS

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Greek Mythology refers to the myths and tales of the ancient Greeks. These legends and myths pertain to their Gods, the nature and their heroes.

*While studying Greek Myths the following skills will be covered*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORY ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people or animals the story is about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem the characters are trying to solve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTENT AREA FOCUS

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td>Students will be working on multiplication, long division and then beginning plane figures and angle measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Students will study the human body focusing on the muscle, skeleton, joints, and coordination systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td>Students will focus on African American History during the month of February and Women’s History during the month of March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students will write an opinion essay using the writing process. Paragraphing, writing conventions, and grammar will be covered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMINDEERS

**Homework:** Your son/daughter is expected to copy their homework assignments in their agendas. Please check his/her agenda daily. A parent’s signature is required.

**Attendance:** Please make sure your child arrives on time daily. For absences, please send a written reason stating why your child was absent.

**Supplies:** Please replenish your child’s school supplies: Headphones, crayons, notebooks, glue, and scissors.

Fourth Grade Team: Ms., Mrs., and Ms.
what they were teaching, they described their current practice as teaching theme and character with a graphic organizer, I asked them how they used it in the classroom:

1. SUSANNA: We’ve done it modeling, then we do it with partners.
2. VICTORIA: Then they do it with the group.
3. SALLY: Then they do it independently

All three teachers were quick to respond to my question with a generic description of the process of gradual release of responsibility (Fisher & Frey, 2008). While my background knowledge in literacy professional development allowed me to visualize what this looked like in the classroom, these terms made the real processes, purposes, and contexts of the work opaque to others outside education. Rebecca shifted the conversation with a question of purpose in light of the teacher-family communication:

1. REBECCA: How would a parent use it at home?
2. SALLY: That was how we first started talking about it; we were talking about movies and identifying the theme in movies. I had a PowerPoint with that. So, like you said, a TV show or movie. What did you learn from this? How did you know that that was what you learned? What was happening in the story? Just to get the kids talking…
3. VICTORIA: Taking it from the story and applying it to yourself. Sometimes my students say, “Weell, it's about Little Red Riding Hood.” No, think about how you would apply that to yourself. Think about a message or lesson that you could apply to
Victoria and Sally elaborate on the complexities of instructing about theme and character: taking lessons out of a text and applying them generally (lines 1-6) and examining deeply within the text to find evidence (lines 9-12). As they concur on the complexity of the work, the group also articulates that this is for “real life” (line 7) and can apply “to anyone” (line 8) and in real world texts like “a movie or a TV show” (line 14).

After we had established a message for the communication, we brainstormed ways we could assess communication effectiveness, how would we know if parents talked to their children about the reading comprehension questions?

1 VICTORIA: We have to get the signature, I mean something.

2 JAIME: So is there any other way to find out if they did it besides the signature?

3 SALLY: Sometimes I think signatures are the kid saying, “Oh, teacher said you have to sign this,” and [imitating the parent] “Oh” Done. They don’t even look at it.
Victoria and Sally acknowledge that some sort of confirmation of families’ interpretation is necessary (line 1 and 3-4), but something more substantial like a “reflection” (line 5) or a “question” is needed to understand how families received the message and the task. We continued to brainstorm more ideas, including having a class discussion about the family activity. I left the first session feeling satisfied that we had designed a simple, straightforward plan to send a short newsletter to families, and that the teachers had several options to move forward with their designs (Researcher Journal, 2/18/15).

Yet when we regrouped four weeks later, the teachers had neither enacted nor finished developing the communication. They were overwhelmed with the rhythms of other responsibilities:

1  JAIME: So tell me where you're at. I know it's [PARCC] testing day two. So I know it's stressful.

2  SALLY: [overlapping] Like ask a question. I like your micro survey. (Audio Transcript, 4th grade Session, 2/18/2015)

3  SUSANNA: We had grades due

4  SALLY: We had grades due, testing.

5  SUSANNA: That was part of our delay with the communication. It was the grades.

6  SALLY: Everything was being due.

7  SUSANNA: It was the grades, the testing. I was out sick.

8  SALLY: I was out sick.

9  SUSANNA: So, you know, it's just constantly.
The stress was palatable in their words and body language; the cycle of assessment and grades had collided in a perfect storm. Teachers were required to upload mid-quarter grades to the online grade book so that the school could print progress reports (lines 2, 3, & 6). They had to progress monitor at-risk students using their own classroom-based assessment tool and upload the scores to an online document (lines 9-10). The school was in the second day of the PARCC assessment, administered for the first time in place of the former state achievement test. When the professional responsibilities were at their peak, both Susanna and Sally had been sick (lines 6 and 7). I left.

In the session, we continued unpacking their professional responsibilities and revisited the newsletter we had planned. They wanted the format to be visually effective and include all of the information we had planned: the graphic organizer, the supporting comprehension questions, a sample text, and parent feedback questions. They also noted a need to “minimize the paper output” (Sally, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 3/11/15). Thus, they took time to format the newsletter into one page, and it took time to find a new, shorter version of *King Midas and the Golden Touch* that was available in both Spanish and English.

Each teacher had a limited number of copies they were permitted to make each month. Sally summed up the concerns of the teachers: “Parent communication is crazy important and I am making one for math, and now the reading. So it's almost like you're pulling from classroom work now that you are not going to copy because you are copying the newsletter. I guess that's what scares me too” (Sally, 4th Grade Session, 3/11/15). For the teachers, paper is a finite resource and it can only be allocated to “crazy important” teacher-family communication if
classroom work has been sufficiently resourced. When I suggested that teachers could send home the same copies they used in class and have students bring them back, the teachers were quick to point out that a handful of students would not bring them back and classroom instruction would be disrupted. Susanna summed up the teachers’ strategy, “So what I am doing now is keeping them here too.”

The next week, the teachers finished developing the communication and sent it home to families along with the students’ mid-quarter progress reports. The newsletter, shown in Figure 12, featured the supporting questions that the teachers used to get students to “show their thinking” in the classroom. The teachers had completed the graphic organizer with sample answers and had the computer teacher scan the pages so that both the Spanish and English versions could fit on one side of the page.

We started our next session by reviewing the family feedback. During our designing session, we had brainstormed several more open ended questions, so I was disappointed to see the first feedback question was close ended: “Can you see yourself using these strategies? Yes or No” When we met to review the responses, all of the respondents had marked yes. This was surprising to them, but they were even more surprised that a handful of parents had actually squeezed in some open-ended responses into the margins of the slip of paper.

I left this session very worried (Researcher Journal, 3/11/15). I had tried to reiterate to the teachers that one of my goals in the project was to integrate this work into what they were already doing, so it felt manageable and doable (Jaime, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 3/11/15). I felt caught between wanting to see what was possible in their inquiry and not adding extra burdens to their work load. I asked about grades and progress monitoring due dates before
Figure 12. 4th Grade Story Map Newsletter

**Carta de comunicación de lectura**

**Cooper 4º Grado**

Este es un ejemplo de las destrezas que hemos estado practicando con mitos.

Algunas de las preguntas que usted puede preguntar a su hijo (a) son las siguientes:

- ¿Quiénes son los personajes principales?
- ¿Cuáles fueron los eventos importantes que ocurrieron en el cuento?
- ¿Cuál fue el problema y la solución?
- ¿Cuál es la moraleja de la historia?

**Cooper 4th Grade Reading Newsletter**

This is an example of a story map with the skills we have been practicing with myths.

You can ask your child questions about the myths we have been reading at school by asking questions such as

- Who were the characters?
- What were the important events in the story?
- What was the problem and solution?
- What was the story’s theme?

---

Students Name: ___________________________

Did you find this newsletter helpful? Can you see yourself asking your child these questions? __________

¿Fue de ayuda esta carta? Se ve usted haciendo estas preguntas a su hijo(a)? __________________________
scheduling any future dates. But a workable solution to integration emerged from the teachers themselves at the end of the macrocycle.

My reflection and analysis revealed that the teachers needed more concrete scaffolds to make quick, but meaningful communications possible (Researcher Journal, 3/11/15). In preparation for our next session, I developed a “School-Family Communication Generator” (See Figure 13) to facilitate the process of designing the content to communicate and template to facilitate the process of developing the communication.

The use of the communicator helped to crystalize both the challenge they faced and solution the team sought. To collaboratively produce a communication, they required collaborative teaching work to represent. Providing a structured focus and grammatical structure facilitated the 4th grade teachers’ representation of practice to one another and, consequently, the process of design and development of the communication. In 10 minutes of conversation, the teachers were able to summarize their work in a short sentence: “As a group we identified and determined the character’s perspective while reading Greek myths with characters who had different feelings:”

We ran out of time to design the parent feedback questions, but the team agreed that it would be helpful if I came back and supported them in developing the newsletter. I created a template in PowerPoint that served as a layout for uploading content so that little formatting would be needed. I named the template the “3-minute design template” (See Figure 32 in Appendix B) and when we met again, I set my stopwatch to see how efficiently we could get the newsletter to print. After 28 minutes, we had the full English version developed, and Victoria immediately went to work translating the handful of sentences, so that a Spanish version could be copied on the reverse side of the English. The final design is depicted in Figure 14.
Figure 13. Victoria’s Communication Generator

**School-Family Communication Generator**

- **Purpose:** Communicate about teaching and learning in the classroom.
- **Tone:** A celebratory toast.

**Step 1. Select the curricular focus.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective (Character's perspectives in the myth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Step 2. Select a learning portrait.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Step 3. Tell the story.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Learning Verb</th>
<th>How? When? Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a group</td>
<td>identified and determined the character's perspective</td>
<td>while reading Greek myth characters' feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 4. Ask for family feedback.**

---

**3-Minute Design**

1. Title + 1 Text Element* + 2 graphic elements* + 1 Family Feedback Element

*15 words or less **e.g.,** photograph, graphic organizer, student work

Grade 3.20.15
The final design features an iteration of the summary sentence we created with the generator in the previous session. It highlights a photograph of two of Victoria’s students drawing of a brick wall from different perspectives, and uses Microsoft SmartArt to depict a graphic organizer with examples of characters’ perspectives in a Greek Myth. The parent feedback question asks them to reflect on the issue that is provoking different perspectives in the story – the golden touch.
Although it took longer than 3 minutes, the teachers were pleased with their productivity using the generator and the template and how they supported their “decision making” (Susanna, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 3/25/15). But the challenges of time still loomed in the teachers’ minds. At the end of the session, I asked the team to reflect on how the process:

1. SUSANNA: No, it's good. Thank you. I mean it's just time to sit here when we have all these other things.
2. SALLY: [overlapping] a million other things.
3. SUSANNA: Yesterday, it was our grade level [meeting].
4. SALLY: Grade level [meeting] so we didn't have a prep yesterday and now we won't have a prep today. Tomorrow's planning and we won't have a prep. Friday I have IEP's all day so I won't have a prep. So I've had one prep all week.
5. JAIME: Okay, I'll leave. [joking]
6. SALLY: No, it's okay.
7. SUSANNA: That's the hard part about all of this, you know. Whether you were here or weren't here.
8. SALLY: There's so much on our plate. This is something I would do at home, me personally.
9. VICTORIA: When I have time to think and plan.
10. JAIME: So it's really “the deciding what to put on there” is the time part?
11. SALLY: I think it's probably something that we can throw out during planning on Thursdays. Just real quick, “What do we want to put in the newsletter?” And then each of us type up our own, real quick… if we have this thing going on.
12. JAIME: Because it sounds like you are already in your planning period saying, “What
Their reflections helped highlight some nuances of teachers’ time for innovation (Bruno, 1997; Cambone, 1995) On one hand, the teachers don’t perceive their prep period as potential time for thinking and innovation. Susanna comments in line 1 that it is a lot to sacrifice “just time to sit here” and do innovation work “when we have all these other things” that are required to be completed (lines 1 and 2). Both Sally (line 12) and Victoria (line 14) reveal that their real time to think and plan is at home, not in the scheduled prep periods. Sally describes the grade level meeting, the planning period, and the IEP meetings days without a prep, implying a loss of time to complete tasks and make room to think and plan. However, in lines 16-18 Sally proposes the teacher-directed lesson-planning meeting as a time when the team already thinks about the kinds of questions we have been talking about in our inquiry together.

4th Grade: Second Macrocycle of Inquiry

In our second cycle of inquiry, the 4th grade integrated our inquiry into their weekly planning meetings. Looking at this shift retrospectively through the lens of cyclical rhythms, this weekly planning meeting as a place to design communication is connected to the rhythm of the team’s quarterly newsletter. Goals and curriculum are laid out in the unit plan at the beginning of the quarter, revisited and expanded upon during weekly planning sessions, and graded and assessed weekly and quarterly. Likewise, the quarterly teacher-family communication summarizes the objectives and the curriculum of the quarter and the cycle of the weekly meetings more ongoing details.

In the fourth quarter, I began coming to the team’s weekly lesson planning meetings. As discussed in chapter 3, these meetings were focused on planning for the comprehension-focused unit. My initial plan was to sit in on the meetings, take notes, and make suggestions for how we
design these messages into communication with families. My hope was they would build off the successful use of the template and use it more frequently (Researcher Journal, 4/24/15). As it turned out, my new role in the process uncovered new directions for our inquiry.

The fourth quarter unit plan shifted focus to historical literacy and students read biographical texts about historical leaders (4th Grade, Fourth Quarter Unit Plan, 5/20/15). The purpose of the meetings was to identify the texts and instructional strategies that the teachers would use in the coming week; the table was loaded with materials including graphic organizers, short texts about leaders, and various instructional resources teachers had found online. Listening in to the teachers’ planning, I found it challenging to identify something that the teachers could all communicate to families, because the conversation revolved mainly around how they were all in different places (Researcher Journal, 4/24/15). For example, Sally needed to find new texts and new activities for the coming week, but Victoria’s class was about two weeks behind Sally’s. Sally needed to find new texts at the 4th grade level, while Victoria was problem-solving students’ difficulties in identifying the main idea and details. In all of the classrooms, teachers were thinking about how to better support students’ knowledge of when to draw on their own experiences and knowledge of leaders versus when to draw on evidence from the text.

I suggested that the “essential questions” for the unit would be productive material for dialogue with families: (a) What makes someone a leader of change? (b) How do leaders impact others? (c) How can one person make a difference? (d) What do leaders have to do to get people’s support? (4th Grade, Fourth Quarter Unit Plan, 5/20/15). The teachers liked the idea, but Sally raised a logistical question that had emerged in her enactment of the past designs, “The problem I'm having is that the kids are answering the questions without the parents.” (Audio Transcript, 4th grade session, 4/24/15). I suggested that they call the communication a parent
interview, rather than a newsletter. The teachers were enthusiastic about the plan, particularly because they could give clear directions to students who would conduct the interview; I was enthusiastic about this as an avenue to hear families’ perspectives and potentially incorporate them into the classroom (Researcher Journal, 4/24/15). Thinking about these community resources reminded me of the mosaics of leaders that decorated the front of the north building, just beneath the windows of Sally’s classroom where we were meeting. I proposed the idea of taking a picture of one of the mosaics to make a visible connection in the communication between the unit and a resource in the community (i.e., public art honoring cultural leaders). This suggestion prompted a thought-provoking discussion:

1  SUSANNA: I was just wondering if we could just download a picture from the computer.

2  SALLY: We could probably find one, but it's more authentic to go out there.

3  SUSANNA: Well, that's why I was wondering.

4  JAIME: I'll go.

5  SALLY: I mean, it's right out here. I have no problem. I can just drive after school today and get it.

6  JAIME: I can send it to you.

7  VICTORIA: Can we take the kids out?

8  SALLY: We went on a walking tour last year in 2nd grade to go look at the murals. That could be something we do too as a field trip.

9  VICTORIA: We already have it there. Other schools come and see them. Why go take a picture when we could go outside?

10  SALLY: No, they do. We have to shut the windows because they are out there talking.
First, teachers raised issues of access. Although the mosaics are not visible from the classroom, they are within inches of their classroom windows and visible at the door where the 4th grade students are dismissed each day. Yet the teachers perceive accessing the murals, even to take a picture, as complicated. Susanna suggests downloading a picture would be easier, but Sally is willing to “drive” (line 6-7) around from the staff parking lot in the rear of the building. Then, Victoria and Rebecca bring up instructional possibilities for the mosaics if they “can” go out (line 9) and study the messages (line 15-16) contained in the art. In the middle of this interchange (line 8), I offer to take the picture myself and send it to them. I worried that, without the picture, the team would not be able to enact the communication we planned, but I was even more puzzled by their perceived barriers to accessing the resource (Researcher Journal, 4/24/15).

We left with a clear, straightforward plan. I took the picture of the mural immediately following the session and emailed it to the team, but when we regrouped then next time the interview had not been developed or sent home. In the next lesson-planning meeting, we brought up the idea again, but this time I supported the teachers in developing it during the session. (Audio Transcript, 4th grade session, 4/30/15). The interview, shown in Figure 15, features the essential question, “What makes a leader of change?” It summarizes the work of the unit in a sentence and in the photograph of the exterior mosaic of Cesar Chávez. The interview engages the students and families in the core strategy of the unit - identifying evidence of a leader’s legacy.
After the session, Victoria translated the interview handout into Spanish and teachers sent it home. Families responded, though the rate and content varied across the three classrooms. Some responses described local leaders (see Figure 16, describing a local political leader’s efforts at reform). Victoria received 22 responses, and Susanna received 10; Sally reported that once again many of her students appeared to not ask their parents the questions and simply fill it out themselves with information about the leaders they had read about in the classroom. She attributed this to lack of familiarity with two-way teacher-family communication on the parts of students and families, “I think a lot of parents too are used to newsletters just coming home that they can kind of see what's going on and there's no work behind it, it's just there.” (Sally, Audio
Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 5/20/15). Victoria received almost all of her students’ responses and she emailed me to tell me that she “enjoyed” the interview: “Reading their answers also allowed me to get to know them better. Even though some parents do not speak English very well, their Spanish writing skills are great. I can tell that some parents are well educated” (Victoria, Personal Email, 5/8/15).

**Figure 16. Leader Parent Interview Sample Response**

At this final session, Sally was looking for new biographical texts to use in her lesson plans for the coming week. We debated the possibilities of using the responses from the parent interviews as a “text.” Sally was keen to the idea of doing student-directed projects, but was wary of using the parent interviews without a 100% response rate. She usually used selected
texts from online resources that were already organized by reading level, such as RAZ kids, because “I worry about reading level though. Like this one was something Zapata. Will they be able find that person? India, Gandhi…. Then Juarez, will they be able to find stuff at their level that they can comprehend?” In the ensuing discussion, we discussed the role that authentic research can play in supporting students’ comprehension of complex texts and the potential benefits of expanding students’ access to texts (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2012). Sally warmed up to the idea of letting students direct their own research, and bring it back “then they can go back to this and say, ‘Oh, now I know why you wrote this, Mom.’” (Sally, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 5/20/15). Sally had sufficient confidence to implement the project and reported having done so.

It is important to note that moving into the weekly planning periods did not result in the teachers collaboratively developing a weekly newsletter. This was largely due to the teachers’ varied pacing in implementing the unit, which made it impractical to collaboratively plan the unit and teacher-family communication (Audio Transcript, 4th Grade session, 4/30/15, Sally, Final Interview, 6/11/15). However, the teachers reported being pleased with the new arrangement. They were happy that this change streamlined their scheduled meetings in the week, and they also found it more productive. In her final interview, Susanna reflected,

1 I thought the planning was a great idea. You were another set of ears. You were just kind of taking what we were doing at that moment and it wasn't like we were doing something extra. We were just doing what we usually do. Then you could kind of help us, ‘This is how we could think about doing out newsletter.’ That was great.” (Susanna, Final Interview, 6/17/15)

In her final interview, Sally
4th Grade: Summary of Knowledge-of-Practice

Across the macrocycles, I found evidence of the 4th grade team’s knowledge-of-practice of teacher-family communication and, in this section, present a summative analysis of the team’s knowledge-of-practice. In the course of my analysis, I examined the 4th grade quarterly newsletters (see Figure 10 and Figure 11), story map newsletter, (Figure 12), character perspective newsletter (Figure 14), and leader parent interview (Figure 15).

The 4th grade team’s newsletters featured conceptual messages about literacy skills and strategies: specifically story elements and character perspective. The initial quarterly newsletters offer lists of the topics that will be covered throughout the quarter. Although the names of some of these topics imply processes (e.g., compare and contrast), the list organization presents them as static objectives that teachers will deliver during the quarter and “students will” master. In the character perspective and story map newsletters, the messages become more personal-process oriented with the use of the first person (i.e., “we have been practicing” in place of “students will”). In contrast, the leader parent interview takes this one step further, and inviting families and students to actively engage in the learning process itself.

Over the course of inquiry, the team’s designs shifted from being text-focused toward becoming more visual and open design. The use of PowerPoint facilitated incorporating photographs and graphic elements. The directionality of the team’s communication also evolved from one-way communication, to a yes or no question, to spaces for families to share their own beliefs and experience.

The context of the communication remained a challenge for the 4th grade team. The teachers relied on the students to deliver the communication to families. When we attempted to collect parent feedback, many students would not bring back a response, particularly in the
Susanna and Sally’s classrooms. In the third quarter, the families received three communications and the quarter ended with parent-teacher conferences. In the fourth quarter, the interview was the only communication that families received.

**The Coach, Rebecca**

In this section, I present analysis related to the coach and her macrocycle of inquiry. I begin with analysis of interview data and survey data related to her background and existing teacher-family communication practices. Then I describe her macrocycle of inquiry.

**Rebecca: Entering Knowledge-of-Practice**

Rebecca’s multiple roles gave her the flexibility to participate in and spearhead multiple opportunities for engaging families in communication. She collaborated with families as an elected representative on the Local School Council, the district’s structure for local site governance of school improvement, budget, and evaluation of principals. She also provided workshops for parents were being trained to provide classroom support. In past years, she had organized an annual family literacy night. She did presentations for parents as part of an after school program, and coordinated “personal learning plan” meetings with families whose children were required to attend summer school. And now she was thinking about the school website and the many hallway bulletin boards as untapped opportunities for communication.

Rebecca used the metaphor of equipment to describe the messages and stances she tried to communicate to families:

1. The more detailed I am with them, the more I share with them, the more I explain to them, I feel the more power I am giving to them. Even now, I am very intentional to give them all the equipment so that they are informed because I feel they need to be.

(Rebecca, Initial Interview, 12/15/14)
She was conscious that the details and breadth of the information that she communicated to families (lines 1 and 2) were giving families usable “equipment” (line 3) that could use for empowerment.

Rebecca developed a school-wide communication channel in the form of data binders to “equip” parents with information about their children’s data. The data binder provided structure for classroom teachers to communicate with families about student progress on NWEA testing and a protocol for developing shared goals during conferences. She saw the series of conferences as an opportunity to iteratively explain to families: “This is what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how we are doing it.” (Rebecca, Initial Interview, 12/15/14). A 4th grade student’s data binder pages are shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17. NWEA Data Binder Score Sheet and Teacher-Student-Family Goal Sheet**

The data binder is designed to show the narrative of student learning and development as measured by the NWEA assessment scores. Rebecca designed the pages to take a partnership stance towards families by making student goals transparent for families. While this sheet facilitates an at-a-glance, simplified look at students’ scores over time the page uses technical
language to name each domain. The goals are co-constructed by teachers and students, but families’ only input is a signature of acceptance.

Rebecca described her own school experience with as a child as an influence and impetus in her professional work:

1. My parents. Both of them didn't finish school, but they instilled… education was so
critical for them. Whether they understood it or not they were always involved. They
were always there. I don't know if all the kids have that. Not to speak negatively about
that. It was usually my mom, but if he could be present, he could. My mom used to buy
us books on records. We would sing songs. And then books. We did love books and I
was always part of a book club. And they encouraged that. (Rebecca, Initial Interview,
12/15/14)

She saw her family’s support as a critical influence in her valuing education (lines 1-2) and her love of literacy (lines 4-6). Although her family did not have high levels of education or proficiency in English, they supported her with their presence (lines 2-3) and willingness to provide educational materials and experiences (lines 4-5).

Rebecca: Initial Participation

Although Rebecca had a solid history of communicating with and engaging families, her “many hats,” as she called her roles, presented a challenge for participating fully in the inquiry. When we made the decision for the two grade levels to shift into separate inquiry groups, we decided that she would participate alongside the 4th grade. While the 4th grade shared a common prep every day, Rebecca was only scheduled to work with 4th grade in that prep period on Tuesdays when she facilitated the “grade level” meeting. While she attended the first 4th grade session on 2/18/15), other obligations prevented her attending remaining ones. For example, on
March 20th she emailed that she had to fulfill a coaching obligation with a teacher from another team during the 4th grade session (Rebecca, Personal Communication, 3/20/15).

In addition to time challenges, the goals of Rebecca’s inquiry seemed muddled by her participation with the 4th grade team. As discussed in chapter 3, I recruited Rebecca to participate in the inquiry in her role as a coach or administrator. However, in the introductory sessions, Rebecca decided to focus on communicating with families of her intervention students. At the end of our second introductory session, she described her plan for communicating with families as “Share with families the tools to support build literacy: reading test daily & how to, including a balance of texts.” (Rebecca, Written Reflection, 1/30/15). A few weeks later, in the first 4th grade session, Rebecca was still thinking about what to do:

1. Well, I didn’t send mine out yet. I’ve been contemplating what I want to do, so I just
2. started working on it. And then I'm wondering if I want to send it just to the kids I'm
3. working with or to all of the students because I think that all the students could benefit
4. from this too. (Rebecca, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session 2/18/2015)

In that session, Rebecca participated in the conversation and supported the 4th grade teachers in their inquiry, but we did not address the problems of practice that she had presented at the outset. At the end of the session she expressed hesitation about her design when she commented, “Mine might look different” (Rebecca, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 2/18/15). Given challenges with time and her own inquiry focus, we created a plan to meet one-on-one and discuss the handouts.

**Rebecca: Macrocycle of Inquiry**

We began our first session reflecting and analyzing on handouts she designed in March for her intervention students. Figure 18 shows a communication made for one student who was
Task

Explain to your aunt what QAR is and how it helps you as a reader.
Use the above images to support your explanation.
Share an example of a question.
Ask your aunt to give you an example of a question.

Student Question Sample:_____________________________________________________________________

Aunt Question Sample:_____________________________________________________________________
working on his own strategy development using QAR (Raphael & Au, 2005). Rebecca’s first communications were designed to communicate the specific reading strategies her small groups had been working with during intervention time. Rebecca made a separate handout for each student with clip art to illustrate the reading strategies they were learning. She provided this particular student with a text, had him rehearse the procedure in class, and then assigned him to re-read the text and develop questions with his family. In reflecting on the communication, Rebecca remarked, “This is actually probably the first homework he actually bought back.”

We decided to build off the success of the QAR handout by designing an additional strategy-focused communication. We brainstormed about the comprehension strategies that were incorporated across all of her intervention work, and decided to focus on monitoring comprehension. In our discussion, we reflected that the anchor chart, shown in Figure 19, was used to make thinking visible to her students (Rebecca, Audio Transcript, 3/27/15). So, in our session we spent time designing how this might be adapted for teacher-family communication.

After our session, Rebecca used the 3-minute design template and created an overview of the steps with for monitoring comprehension. Figure 20 displays the translation she created in Spanish for use within her students’ families. She personalized each handout with a picture of each child’s written notes when using the strategy in class. During the district-wide parent-teacher conferences, she met with her students’ families and “prepped them” for a new communication routine. She replayed her message to the families to me:

1 This is something we're going to be doing from now until the end of the school year.
2 I'm sharing strategies that we're doing in class and I just wanted to let you know that I'll be sending this home. So look for it.' (Coach Session, 4/24/15)
She recognized that families were not accustomed to receiving frequent communication from her as the intervention teacher or having the obligation to respond

**Figure 19. Rebecca’s Comprehension Monitoring Anchor Chart**
Figure 20. Rebecca’s Monitoring Comprehension Handout

STOP & REFLECT

Monitor our understanding of the text to clarify meaning.

After reading a section of the text.

What happened in the text?
What did I learn?
What was important?

Do I understand what I read?

What are you noticing about your child while they read?

Examples:
- Read Silently
- Read Aloud
- Reread the text
- Write notes
- Repeat words
- Correct mistakes
- Ask questions
Together, we collaboratively reflected on and analyzed the communication. She provided a generous space for families to tell her what they noticed about their child’s reading and, based on the feedback of a colleague, she included examples of what families might notice:

REBECCA: And one of the things that I did do is, because I got feedback from a colleague. I shared this question with her and she said, “Well, how would they know what they're supposed to be looking for?” And someone might wonder, “Well, what do I write down?” So I gave them some samples and I translated them. I didn't know if that was a good thing or not, but I was just thinking, “Here are some samples of what they might look for.” So hopefully they'll write their own stuff.

JAIME: So now it's interesting because I imagine that these are things that you notice. REBECCA: I tried to make it really simple, like read aloud. Because some kids even though you tell them to read on their own they still read in a louder voice. And that's usually you might see that in our third graders because they transition from primary and we always read aloud and usually as kids get older they usually like to hear themselves read. So I didn't know if it's a habit that kids do when they are working at home. But rereading the text, are they writing notes, are they repeating words, correcting mistakes. I tried to make it simple. I didn't write “Correct miscues” because that might throw them off, so I didn't know. I don't know if that was a good thing.

(Audio Transcript, Coach Session, 4/24/15)

Rebecca considered how families might respond to this new request to monitor their children’s reading and so she provided “samples” in the checklist (lines 2-6). She was intentional to refrain from jargon like “miscues” so that families would not be “thrown off” (lines 13-15).
Rebecca also wanted to build further dialogue from families’ responses. When we reflected on the families’ responses a few weeks later (Researcher journal, 5/8/15). We noticed that several families used the list as script to write their responses. For example, as displayed in Figure 21, a student’s family member selected all but one of the example observations; they report the title of the book and that the boy read aloud and report that he is pausing at punctuation and unknown words, and taking notes about the words he doesn’t know.

**Figure 21. Sample Parent Response Monitoring Comprehension Handout**

In the checklist, Rebecca had provided families with “samples” of behaviors they might notice, but the checklist didn’t show how the behaviors related to each other or how they impacted students’ literacy. We discussed how Rebecca might take a different stance to scaffold families, by starting the conversation:

1. **JAIME:** It's something that I have been wondering about as a parent. Here's the open
Thus, the design of the communication evolved into a page with three opened-ended boxes shown in Figure 22. First, Rebecca described the student’s progress, “Reads silently, finds information in the text, and tries to correct her errors.” In the second section, Rebecca lists strategies that she has observed to help the student: “This helps me: (1) Read the text more than one time; (2) After reading one part of the text write the most important part in one sentence; (3) Saying it aloud helps to write it.” In the third box, she asks families to use the strategy and respond to let her know which strategies they used and how it helped them. In this case the parent wrote, “While she corrects the errors she learns new sounds in the words and how to pronounce them correctly.”

2 comment box, but then I never get a comment in there about my child. So it might be interesting to follow up with...

4 REBECCA: So this might be my box to send in there and say “This is what I notice your child is doing this week.” Do you think I should send this before sending this out?

6 There are some kids I didn't send it yet. Do you think I should put down, “This is what I noticed your child did this week.”?

8 JAIME: Because you're showing, “I'm hoping you're going to tell me something.’ or starting to go back and forth.

10 REBECCA: That could be a great follow up to say. “These are the things I've noticed. Here's some ways we can work together to support them.” (Coach Session, 4/24/16)
While Rebecca had a history of communicating to families, these opportunities for inquiry allowed Rebecca to engage in two-way communication with families. At the end of the project, Rebecca describes this shift in thinking as a new layer to incorporate:

1. I haven’t really shared what kind of strategies. I try to, but I haven’t made it visual. I think I try to say it orally and sometimes it might be [makes sound of it going over her head] It might not make sense, they’re like, “What are you talking about?” I have tried to show the student work and the data, but this is another way of showing data, another way of showing the learning that’s happening with your child by showing the student work. And seeing the impact on that. [Asking]“What do you notice?” So it’s another layer that I think is critical on top of everything else that we already do. So I would say it’s another way of building relationships with parents and building that
She describes the need to make the information comprehensible and meaningful for families (lines 1-6) as a way to build relationships (lines 8-9). She asserts that this communication should be a positive “showcase” (line 9) and allow for two-way questioning (line 10).

Rebecca: Summary of Knowledge-of-Practice

Upon entering the intervention, Rebecca had a very clear vision of the aims and purposes of her literacy instruction. Throughout our collaboration, the continually came back to the metaphor of her work as equipping students and families with tools:

1. And honestly, that’s what I communicate to all of them. “I am giving you a toolbox of different things that you can do in every subject, that’s what I’m equipping you with.’
2. Why are we doing this? What is this for? How is this going to help me? When can you use it? It’s just constantly repeating that and teaching that. That’s our goal. (Rebecca, Audio Transcript, Coach Session, 6/1/2015)

The clarity and tangibility of the tools in Rebecca’s thinking and classroom practice facilitated the process of making the tools visible to families in the communication she designed for families: the QAR Handout (Figure 18), the Monitoring Comprehension Handout (Figure 20), and the Family Dialogue Folder (Figure 22). Key skills and strategies were communicated both as conceptual messages and as process narratives. For example, in the Monitoring Comprehension Handout she used clip art to show the steps readers do to monitor comprehension and then included a photograph of each student’s monitoring comprehension work from the classroom.
In her initial designs, Rebecca uses clip art to add visual elements to her communication. Over the course of her inquiry, she employed less clip art and more student work to “show” the families their children’s learning and development. All three of her communication designs incorporate opportunities for family feedback, but there is a shift of increasing partnership: from asking families to complete a discrete activity in the QAR Handout, to observing their children read, to comparing notes with Rebecca in the Dialogue folder.

Rebecca facilitated families’ navigation to her new communication by prepping them during a face-to-face conference and assembling all of the communication in the Family Dialogue Folder. However, her students were responsible for delivering the messages to their families and back to Rebecca, and they did not meet with her every day, so there were some glitches in the process. These routines made it possible for Rebecca to communicate with families about twice a month.

The Kindergarten Team

Early our work together, I recognized that the kindergarten team had a well-developed system for communicating with families and took an inquiry stance in their work. I knew I would want to build on their existing strength, rather than simply scaffold their design of communication tools. Like the first two teams, my analysis focused on interviews and analysis of collective routines for communicating with families. However, unique to the kindergarten team, is their parent training activity, so I observed four of these events across each of their three classrooms.

In the first macrocycle, we built off this knowledge-of-practice when we reflected and analyzed data workshops and designed a parent feedback form. Analysis of parent feedback about the parent data workshops drove the second cycle of inquiry, in which I supported the
teachers in designing, developing, and implementing a workshop to introduce families to an online reading platform.

**Kindergarten: Entering Knowledge-of-Practice in Interviews**

Like Rebecca, the kindergarten teachers discussed in their initial interviews how their personal and professional experiences have influenced their teacher-family communication practice. Gabriela described her own family as not being able to provide “extra support” because they were “not educated” and did not speak English. Although her parents could not support her academically, she appreciated that they taught her important values: “I didn't get much support, but definitely the respect was always there. So that is something very important” (Gabriela, Initial Interview, 1/12/15). She strived to do “more” for her own children and was proud to speak of her son attending an Ivy league university. Gabriela’s personal activities within the community were evident in her “stage presence” in her face-to-face communication with families (Parent Workshop Observations, 2/11/15, 2/28/15, 5/1/15).

Meaghan’s family had emigrated from China as a child and she reported that her personal experience helped her understand the importance of extended families. While they had limited time because of long work shifts and limited knowledge of English language, she recognized that they supported her through their high expectations:

1. Expectations actually. We have family morals. “I expect you to do this and this.' So when I was in grammar school, when I was in high school. I always had very good attendance because of those expectations and also good grades, because of my parents’ expectations. I think it is from the family morals. So you know I have to keep that in mind and do my best. (Meaghan, Initial Interview, 2/18/15)
Like Gabriela and Meaghan, Alicia had also immigrated to the United States, but she did not mention that as an influence in how she related to families. Before she finished her bachelor’s degree she had worked as an assistant teacher in a community-based Head Start in the neighborhood. She saw her current position as a head teacher as one of “more responsibility,” especially in dealing with students of different levels (Alicia, Initial Interview, 1/12/15).

**Collective Teacher-Family Communication Routines.** Like the 4th grade team, the kindergarten teachers participated in school wide routines of a fall open house and parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring (Artifact, 9/14/14, Kindergarten Session, 4/23/15). In contrast to the 4th grade team, the kindergarten teachers had a repertoire of face-to-face and print communication routines with families at the beginning of the intervention. Unlike Rebecca and the 4th grade team second floor classrooms, the kindergarten classrooms were situated on the first floor near an entrance where only kindergarten students entered and were dismissed. On days when our collaborative sessions fell at the last hour of the school day, I observed that this dismissal routine facilitated conversation with families (Researcher Journal, 2/20/15).

All three kindergarten teachers had a routine of sending a weekly homework newsletter to families. This was in contrast to the 4th grade and Rebecca, where homework assignments were given directly to students without any explicit communication with families. The newsletter, illustrated in Figure 23, included homework assignments for each night and a list of vocabulary and high frequency words of the week.
Tarea de la Semana # 18
Enero-12-16-2015

Palabras de la Semana: Payaso, pepino, nariz, naranja, diamante, dado.
Palabras de uso frecuente: pero, ellos, todo, esto, tiene, sobre.

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<td><strong>Fonética:</strong> Escribir las palabras de la semana en tres veces cada una en la libreta. Estar las sonidos de cada palabra.</td>
<td><strong>Fonética:</strong> Escribir 3 veces cada palabra de uso frecuente. Ayude al sujeto a dictar la palabra sonida por seno de cada letra de la palabra. Que el sujeto la escriban.</td>
<td><strong>Fonética:</strong> Escribir una oración corta con las siguientes palabras. Payaso, pepino, nariz. Usar palabras de uso frecuente y escribir una oración. Ejemplo: (El pepino es verde.) Recuerda comenzar con mayúscula y terminar con punto.</td>
<td><strong>Fonética:</strong> Escribir una oración corta con las siguientes palabras. Naranja, diamante, dado. Usar palabras de uso frecuente y escribir una oración. Ejemplo: (La naranja es dulce.) Recuerda comenzar con mayúscula y terminar con punto.</td>
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<td>2. Me fijo en los dibujos.</td>
<td>3. La idea principal siempre está al principio o al final del libro.</td>
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<td><strong>Matemáticas:</strong> Escribir los números del 0 (cero) al 40. (2 veces)</td>
<td><strong>Matemáticas:</strong> Contestar la hoja de matemáticas.</td>
<td><strong>Matemáticas:</strong> Resuelve cinco restas que tú quieras.</td>
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Viernes.

- Practica tus hojas de las silabas de tu folder.
  Fonética: Crea 5 nuevas palabras usando tus tarjetitas de las silabas y escribirás en tu libreta. Ejemplo: ma + pa = mapa, sa + pe = sapo, pa + le = paco
- Matemáticas: favor de usar la hoja de números del 0 al 100 que las di en el día del taller. Luego, practiquen el juego donde tú les preguntas a tu hijo/a que número está ANTES de, DESPUÉS de, y ENTRE un número. Ejemplo (número entre 8 y 10 es el 9. Un número antes del 8 es el 7. Un número después del 10 es el 11)
- Repasa todas las hojas de las silabas que tienes en el folder.

ANUNCIOS

Lunes= Educación Física  Martes= educación física  Miércoles= arte  Jueves= música  Viernes= educación física.

Esta semana continuaremos con los exámenes de TRC. Es muy importante que continúen estudiando con sus hijos para lograr que ellos lleguen a la meta.

Palabras de uso frecuente, Practicadlas, memorizadlas y escribe cada palabra en una tarjeta

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¿Cómo me porté y trabajé hoy?
Verde= muy bien  Amarillo= primera llamada de atención  Rojo= no se controlaré
Favor de firmar en el cuaderno diariamente

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The newsletters were sent back and forth from school to home in folders throughout the week. Teachers recorded students’ behavior daily, and parents were asked to sign every night. The team reported that virtually all of the students and families completed the homework almost every night, “99% of my students, not 100% of them, but 99” (Alicia, Kindergarten Session, 3/20/15).

Prior to the intervention, the kindergarten team had established a routine of conducting small-group parent workshops about assessment data (Assessment System Artifacts). Gabriela had conceptualized the parent trainings two years before the study in an effort to improve student scores on the required interim test. She credited her own improvement to her professional learning and wanted to give the same opportunity to learn to parents: “How can I blame my parents for not giving me the support that I want and I need if they haven’t been trained?” (Gabriela, Final Interview, 6/19/2015). The kindergarten parent workshops were closely tied to the kindergarten team’s routines of assessment data collection and data analysis. The kindergarten teachers were required to conduct the Reading 3D/DIBELS assessment three times a year, as well as progress monitor at-risk students in between the benchmarking period. The parent workshops were tied to this routine in both time and topic; the workshops commenced immediately following the beginning and middle of the year benchmark testing and built off the data analysis routines from the PLC. After analyzing the student data, the teachers (re)organized students into guided reading groups. Then the teachers organized tailored workshops for each small group of students to introduce the parents to the students’ data, the expectations for their level, and provide strategies for parents to use in the home to support their child’s learning.

**Parent Data Workshops.** In the rest of this section, I analyze data collected during observations of four parent workshops: two in Gabriela’s classroom (2/11/15 and 2/28/15), one in Alicia’s classroom (2/12/15), and one in Meaghan’s classroom (3/4/15) and teachers’ talk
about the workshops. I include this observation data as part of the analysis of teachers’ entering knowledge-of-practice (rather than as knowledge-of-practice within the inquiry) because the workshops were initially designed, developed, and enacted entirely outside of our collaborative inquiry.

All of the parent trainings were held in the classrooms during the teachers’ prep periods, the last hour of the day. The parents would arrive and sign in at the office, then were escorted by teachers to the classroom. In each room, parents sat in children’s chairs around the kidney-shaped tables used for small group instruction; teachers sat in the teacher chair.

The sessions began with the teachers passing out the score reports printed provided by the assessment company and reviewing the students’ current guided reading levels. Gabriela explained that they wanted to make their professional practice of data analysis transparent so “parents understand how we go about forming these groups and what do these tests really represent. What do they really mean? (Gabriela, Initial Interview, 1/12/15). The teachers presented the expectations and then physically turned to each parent and used eye contact and their finger to help parents attend to how it applied to their child. Then the teacher used a book from the assessment kit at the appropriate instructional level to demonstrate expectations for the level. The teachers reviewed each tested domain, reenacting the manner in which they assessed them, embedding the technical language of the assessment throughout. For example, they stressed that reading comprehension questions were asked “without looking back at the story” (Meghan, Fieldnotes, 3/5/15) and shared some texts used in assessment to illustrate how challenging this was. For example, in her workshop with parents of emergent readers, Gabriela reenacted how a student at that level might read sound by sound, noting “estaba preocupado
sobre leer correctamente” (they [their children] are worried about reading correctly), but they need to be able to comprehend and retell details from the story (Fieldnotes, 2/11/15).

The teachers referred to the sessions as “trainings.” While I felt the name of training had a commanding tone, the sessions were highly personalized and celebrated individual students. As it was mid-year, teachers were able to integrate discussion of assessment norms with celebrating student growth. In every session, I observed, teachers used language that emphasized student growth: “Ella subió dos niveles!” (She jumped two levels!) (Gabriela, Fieldnotes, 2/11/15), “¡Todos lograron! Estoy muy muy muy feliz” (They all achieved! I am very very very happy) (Alicia, Fieldnotes, 2/12/15), “Look, all 3 students past the end of year goal at midyear!” (Meghan, Fieldnotes, 3/4/15), “¡90 sonidos, wow! ¡En el principio era 8! ¡Wow, el cambio! (90 sounds, wow! In the beginning it was 8! Wow, the Change!” (Gabriela’s, Parent Data Workshop, 2/25/15),

The sessions held in students’ chairs provided a window into the instruction each child experienced. Throughout these training sessions, teachers referenced instructional materials such as poster-sized graphic organizers, leveled texts, and word walls. In the case of Gabriela’s most advanced readers, Gabriela effectively reenacted a small group lesson and called on parents to read aloud their children’s actual response from their reader’s notebook (Fieldnotes, 2/25/15). They heard and saw examples of the instructional needs of their children, and saw classroom tools used them in context.

Although the format of parent trainings was primarily teacher-directed, the small group setting afforded opportunities for two-way communication. In each group I observed, there was at least one parent who asked the teacher questions or share reflections, “Mi hijo me dijo, ‘No puedo.’ Y le dije, ‘Si, ¡trata, trata!’” (My son told me, ‘I can’t’ And I told him, ‘Yes, try, try!’)
I was eager to start collaborating with the kindergarten group, and tried several times to get in contact with them via email. When I suggested a time and date for us to meet, I got an email response that “We have a very busy week” (Gabriela, Personal Email, 2/8/15). In the context of our email exchange to schedule the teacher meeting, she mentioned that they weren’t able to meet with me because they had scheduled parent workshops this week. I immediately asked to come and conducted the first two observations of parent data workshops discussed in the previous section.

Gabriela describes continued communication as a “responsibility” (line 3), an expectation that parents now have because of the data workshops (lines 1-3). In the next section, I discuss how the parent data workshop came to be a focus of the first macrocycle of inquiry with the kindergarten team.

**Kindergarten: First Macrocycle of Inquiry**

I was eager to start collaborating with the kindergarten group, and tried several times to get in contact with them via email. When I suggested a time and date for us to meet, I got an email response that “We have a very busy week” (Gabriela, Personal Email, 2/8/15). In the context of our email exchange to schedule the teacher meeting, she mentioned that they weren’t able to meet with me because they had scheduled parent workshops this week. I immediately asked to come and conducted the first two observations of parent data workshops discussed in the previous section.

While the data workshops were only formally scheduled two times a year, the teachers saw them as a lever for other communication with families:

1. But we'll still have some type of communication with them because they want to know.
2. They'll want to know “Okay, I worked on this and you said you would let me know within three weeks, how did it go?’ So we have the responsibility to answer back. One way or the other. (Gabriela, Kindergarten Session, 2/20/15)

Gabriela describes continued communication as a “responsibility” (line 3), an expectation that parents now have because of the data workshops (lines 1-3). In the next section, I discuss how the parent data workshop came to be a focus of the first macrocycle of inquiry with the kindergarten team.

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The email exchange highlighted two issues. First, like the other two teams I was supporting, my work with the K team would need to occur within the rhythm of their existing work. In this case, the rhythm of the parent data workshops was established, but had not been articulated. While Gabriela had mentioned parent workshops in her initial interview, she did not note specific timelines or dates. I learned that these workshops tended to be scheduled with each small group about one week in advance of the event. This scheduling depended on when teachers completed relevant assessments, analyzed the data with the primary grade coach, and identified times that would not conflict with other scheduled meetings (i.e., the grade level meetings or IEP meetings) (Gabriela, Initial Interview, 1/12/15, Fieldnotes 2/12/15). Thus, it was not practical to attempt to set dates for our inquiry without attending to the rhythm that was already in place. Our initial collaborative session was scheduled soon after I had conducted two of the four observations (2/11/15 and 2/12/15), and the teachers had implemented about two thirds of the total 12 workshops (Kindergarten Session 2/20/15). The second session happened after I conducted two more observations of workshops (2/25/15 and 3/4/15) and the teachers had finished implementation of the workshops. This timing allowed for reflection on the workshops that could be immediately applied in the final sessions, while reflecting after completing all of the sessions facilitated the identification of next steps in supporting families.

The email highlighted a second concern that puzzled me. In our second introductory session, we had begun to brainstorm ideas the next steps in communication. In the session, we had spent time reflecting on the question “What is important in your literacy curriculum right now?” and making a plan for implementing communication for families about that topic. All three kindergarten teachers had written about reading comprehension being important, but none of them mentioned the parent workshop as part of their plan for communication (Second
Introductory Session Reflection Sheets, 1/30/15). In my view, the parent workshop in the kindergarten classrooms had provided an in-depth look at what was important and there was certainly evidence that teachers communicated about reading comprehension (Researcher Journal, 2/12/15). I wondered why teachers did not recognize these workshops as a potential focus for our inquiry?

As we talked this through in the next session, it became clear that parents as partners had become so integral in their work that it was difficult for them to articulate where their work started and the parents’ work began:

1. We always complain as a whole school, “Well, we need to get parents more involved.”
2. “We need to do this with parents more.” Well, yeah, but some of our parents, they're all different just like our students are and some of our parents, we really have to train. And then, they could be more involved and they could work with their children at home better. But when you ask them to do something and they've never seen you do it.
3. (Gabriela, Kindergarten Session 2/20/15)

From Gabriela’s view others in the school place blame on parents by with calls for them to be “more involved” (line 2). Teachers need to accommodate the different backgrounds of parents (line 3) by making the goals and practices of the school transparent in structured way (i.e., training). In this way, parents can come to understand the expectations of the school and work as partners in achieving their desired goals, which were defined by benchmark assessment.

When I asked about the goal of the workshop and how they would assess whether or not they met the goal, the teachers’ answers were the same: “Yes, we establish a [TRC] goal for each group, and then we progress monitor to see if they got the goal or if we need to modify the strategies we use so that we can continue.” (Alicia, Kindergarten Session, 2/20/15). I suggested
that maybe they were giving themselves too little credit, that perhaps their skilled teaching was also a major support in student learning, and that their workshop “so clearly showed what you do and exactly how you do it and how competent you are at doing it” (Jaime, Kindergarten Session, 2/20/15). I walked them through analysis of my observations dimension by dimension using a handout I had prepared (See Figure 29 in Appendix B). I highlighted how they did, indeed, show their own practice to families in a complex and meaningful way.

In reviewing the dimensions, we discussed possible designs for assessing family feedback about the workshops. The teachers decided to design a survey for the parents to get feedback, opting to make it anonymous so that “It could help them to feel more confident to put what they think about it (Alicia, Kindergarten Session, 2/20/15). We designed a survey, pictured in Figure 24. The teachers sent home the survey to families who had already attended a workshop, and provided time for families to complete the survey during the remaining workshops.

In our second session, we reviewed and analyzed the parent feedback from the sessions. The teachers got a noticeable boost from reviewing the feedback, both when it was complimentary to them and when they saw the families’ enthusiasm for supporting their children’s learning (Researcher Journal, 3/10/15). Our analysis of the feedback, indicated that a number of families requested support accessing more books for improving fluency and comprehension (Parent Workshop Feedback Samples). In Meaghan’s parent workshop, I had observed her introducing families to two online reading platforms, but noted that they seemed unfamiliar with the platforms (Fieldnotes, 3/4/15). We agreed that this would be a valuable resource to support families, and, thus spurred the second macrocycle of inquiry.
Febrero 27, 2015

Estimados padres de familia:

Primero que todo, les quiero decir que estoy muy agradecida por aceptar ser parte de mi equipo. El equipo que trabaja duro para conseguir una meta, la educación de su hijo/a. Les agradezco el haber tomado un poco de su tiempo y reunirse conmigo para planear juntos los próximos pasos a seguir. Aquí les mando algunos puntos que repasamos y analizamos juntos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Práctica y comparar resultados de exámenes de al principio y mitad del año.</th>
<th>Progreso o no?</th>
<th>Estrategias que se implementarán?</th>
<th>Que funcionó de el primer taller esta ahora?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Para poder crecer como profesional y profesora de su hijo/a, es importante saber que opinan ustedes acerca de los entrenamientos que hemos hecho juntos. Favor de leer y contestar estas preguntas:

1. Que más les gustaría saber acerca de cómo ayudar a su niño/a en casa?

   Como ayudarlo para que mejore su entendimiento de las historias.

2. Que cambios has visto en tu niño/a después de asistir a los entrenamientos conmigo?

   Que ya puede leer solo y comienza a entender las historias que lee.

Favor de mandar esta encuesta para el lunes, Marzo 02, 2015.

Como siempre, gracias por su atención!
March 04, 2015

Dear Parent,

First and foremost, I can’t thank you enough for the support with your child’s education. Thank you for accepting to be a part of my team, which is a team who works hard and determined to accomplish one same goal, your child being a successful reader and writer. Allowing me to share some strategies, ideas and analyze your child’s test scores, shows your interest in wanting to know what the next steps are and implement them at home. Here are some of the items we covered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyze and compare beginning and middle of the year testing.</th>
<th>Did your child make progress, yes or no?</th>
<th>Strategies that were implemented.</th>
<th>What worked from the first workshop until today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Phonetic activities:</td>
<td>❁ Specific goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Letter naming and sounds.</td>
<td>❁ Activities at child’s level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ segmenting</td>
<td>❁ routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ identify between a word and a letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ daily homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ the type of questions to ask when reading daily with your child.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What else would you like to know about how to continue to support your child at home?

2. Which one of the items covered, do you think were effective and or beneficial to your child?

Thank you for your feedback ☺️
Kindergarten: Second Macrocycle of Inquiry

In the second macrocycle, we intended to design a workshop to introduce parents to the online reading platforms available through the school subscriptions. We opted to plan for one workshop where families from all three classes could attend. This would allow all of the parents to meet in the computer lab and have access to a computer during the workshop. With all three teachers facilitating, the workshop could be presented in both English and Spanish, which would accommodate Spanish-speaking parents in Meaghan’s class (Audio Transcript, Kindergarten Session, 3/10/15). As the parent data workshops had been developed and refined over three years prior to my study, I saw this as a good opportunity to work accompany the teachers in the process of designing and developing a face-to-face communication. Learning from my experience with the 4th grade, I decided to be proactive about technology issues with the kindergarten team. As it was almost the fourth quarter and the teachers had not used the books in their instruction, I anticipated they would need additional support (Researcher Journal, 3/10/15).

The goal for our collaborative session was planning the workshop and designing a handout to show families how to log in and share teachers’ recommendations for using the platform to support students’ reading at home (Audio Transcript, Kindergarten Session, 3/25/15). In our first session, the teachers explained that the online reading platforms varied depending on the language program (English, monolingual classrooms used MyOn; bilingual classrooms used RAZ Kids).

We created a step-by-step screenshot handout of how to log into MyOn, considering: locating the website, identifying the school name, and logging in. After about 10 minutes, I suggested we log in as a student to see if there were differences between teacher and student views. To everyone’s surprise, the student login opened immediately into a test:
While the testing requirement delayed our design process, this excerpt highlights several concepts teachers needed to know before they could enact the workshop. First, after figuring out their own login and navigation, they needed to be familiar with the student user interface. In this case, there was one interface for initial use (the test) and another for ongoing use (the library). Knowing the student user interface was of heightened importance to support families with limited technology experience or limited English (Noguerón-Liu et al., 2017). Gabriela also reminded the group that as they communicated with family members about technical aspects (i.e., avoiding the student test and getting to the library icon), they created a potential problem by sharing a means for giving their child advance access to the initial log-in test. She noted that they
could be motivating families to use the program to “break barriers” (lines 10-12). As emergent users of the online platforms in their own right, teachers needed structured development support to work out technical dimensions of the platform to plan for the workshop.

The issues of access could not be resolved during the session. However, over the next weeks, teachers reserved the computer lab and resolved three questions related to the platforms and the workshop. First, they selected a platform that all three classes could access. The MyOn test was too long and impractical for Meaghan to assess all of the students before the workshop. The teachers worked with the coach and all of the kindergarten students were able get a login for RAZ kids. They also arranged an informal meeting with Victoria, the 4th grade teacher who was a liaison for the program, to help them log in and begin the process of setting up student accounts. Second, they got permission from the administration to plan a parent workshop and arranged a date to use the computer lab. Then, at parent-teacher conferences, they conducted a verbal poll of families to identify who had Internet access and found that the majority of students did have access to a computer with Internet, but there were many students who did not:

1 MEAGHAN: I have four [of 30] that did not have computer and no access.

2 GABRIELA: I have 11 who have both, I have a few that are planning on getting a computer, but it’s more than half [of 18] though.

3 ALICIA: Most of them have the Internet. 7 [of 18 don’t have access]. (Alicia, Kindergarten Session 4/23/15)

In our second session, we successfully worked through each step of the student user login experience. We adapted a handout that came with the platform laying out steps for entering username and password and identifying routines families could use to support comprehension development. The handout, pictured in Figure 25, effectively served as key areas teachers...
Figure 25. RAZ-Kids Workshop Handout

Tools to Improve Your Reading Comprehension

2 Books a week – 1 Fiction, 1 Non-Fiction

Read the book in different ways

1. Listen to the book.
2. Read silently.
3. Record yourself with your microphone

Take the Quiz

Earn Points to build your robot.

Assignments

= Points = You can do better. Try again.
demonstrated during the workshop (Fieldnotes, 5/1/15). They showed families how to access the platform, and then discussed principles of breadth (2 books a week) and depth (read the book three different ways) in using the platform at home.

The teachers were pleased with the session and observed enthusiasm from the parents who attended, Meghan commented, “I think it went really well from what I saw. The parents were doing it and following Gabriela’s instructions, they were into it. They were very involved.” (Audio Transcript, Kindergarten Session, 5/1/15).

**Kindergarten: Summary of Knowledge-of-Practice**

Upon entering the intervention, the kindergarten team had a very clear and explicit goal in their reading instruction: get students reading at guided reading level E as measured on the TRC assessment (Alicia, Initial Interview, 1/12/15). The goal of getting all students to Level E became the principle that drove their classroom instruction and framed their parent data workshops. In their messages to families in the workshops they demonstrated reading skills and strategies that were necessary to achieve the goal, and they made students’ developmental trajectories transparent through ongoing sharing of student data.

All three teachers were ecstatic to report about the progress their students had made on the TRC by the end of the year. In the entire grade, two students scored at level D while the rest reached level E. Throughout my collaboration, I had been impressed with teachers’ ability to articulate their goals, but I was troubled at how the test dominated the communication (Researcher Journal, 2/20/15). Yet, the teachers continually reiterated the importance of being partners with families, because, as Gabriela summarized, “We’re doing it. We're doing it for one objective. Our kids”” (Gabriela, Final Interview, 6/19/15). They engaged in ongoing communication through workshops, at dismissal, and through the weekly homework routines.
When they missed communicating with a particular family, they followed up at dismissal (Audio Transcripts, Kindergarten Sessions, 4/24/15, 5/1/15).

In her final interview, Alicia replayed a conversation with a parent that highlighted the value that the shared focus brought to the teachers:

1. At the end for the TRC results, everyone was very happy about the results. Even one of my kids that is a level D, she didn't get the goal that was E. I was talking to her mom about, “She didn't get the level.” But she was still really happy, “Oh, yes, I know, but she is reading and writing.” I was, “Yes, but she didn't get the level and maybe during vacation you can continue working with her and blah blah blah.” And she said, “Oh, maestra, bataille por tres meses, I struggled three months teaching just the vowels to my daughter. Now she's reading and writing, and I'm so happy about that!” [laughing] And I was like, ‘Oh, you're right!' So everybody's happy. Even with the kids that didn't get the level, they are happy because their kids are reading and writing. (Alicia, Final Interview, 6/14/15)

The end of year proficient score on the TRC assessment for kindergarten has been designated by the network district office as Level C-D, (TRC Cut Points Document, Artifact), and the school’s goal was Level E. As Alicia recounted this story, she showed how disappointed she felt to deliver the news to the parent that her child hadn’t made the school’s goal (lines 1-3), while the mother helped to reframe the results as a success—after months of her child’s struggle to master the vowels (line 6), her mother emphasized what it meant to her to see her daughter read and write.

In the context of our collaborative work, the kindergarten team did not radically transform their practice, but had an opportunity to deepen their knowledge-of practice through
reflection and analysis. Meghan reflected that the inquiry process allowed them to focus on goals that mattered in a timeframe that worked for them, “So I'm thankful that you were willing to adjust to our schedule. And also working together, we have the same objective, so we said, ‘How will we do this? How will we do this?’” (Meaghan, Final Interview, 2/18/15). This inquiry stance was different from other professional learning contexts where the teams were required to discuss objectives determined by the instructional leadership team or district (Meghan, Final Interview, 6/18/15, Teresa, Principal Interview, 7/1/15). Gabriela described the process as allowing them to reflect on the complexities of their work and identify areas for improvement:

1. And it helped me realize with your presence and your questions and you wanting to see
2. the workshops, realized everything that we do and we do a lot more than we think we
3. do. We just got to try and find other ways make sure that we touch every parent to
4. make this program successful, for our children to succeed… (Gabriela, Final Interview, 6/19/15)
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study and its implications. I organize the chapter into three sections. First, I synthesize findings related to inquiry supports and the features of the intervention across the three teams. Next, I discuss issues of design methodology for professional learning. Finally, I discuss teachers as designers of communication including issues of equity and practical implications.

Inquiry Cycles & Support

The goal of my study was to facilitate opportunities for teachers to demonstrate knowledge-of-practice of communication design so as to engage diverse families as partners in students’ literacy learning and development. To reach this goal, I designed an intervention defined by two key principles: integration into the ecology of the PLC and collaborative inquiry about teacher-family communication design. During implementation of the intervention, I adhered to these principles as I adapted the work in each of the three collaborative contexts.

Through analysis I further developed a theoretical model of inquiry about teacher-family communication design, illustrated in Figure 26. The model includes 6 types of activities. Three types were related to phases of inquiry and directly supported teachers’ knowledge-of-practice development (i.e., designing, enacting, and reflecting & analyzing). In these inquiry phases, teachers made “problematic their own knowledge and practice” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 273). The designing and reflecting & analyzing phases functioned as mechanisms for teachers to replay past communication practice with families and rehearse possibilities for future interactions (Horn, 2010). Outside of our collaborative sessions, teachers engaged in the enacting phase and communicated with families in print and in face-to-face communication. Three types of activities propelled the cycles of inquiry (i.e., (re)imagining, developing, and planning for
In these “propelling” phases, I played a critical role as a facilitator supporting teachers in initially setting goals, identifying resources, and allocating time to engage in communication and inquiry.

**Figure 26. Model of Inquiry about Teacher-Family Communication Design**

![Diagram of Inquiry Model]

In this section I elaborate each type of activity and discuss them in relation to the four key features that made the intervention responsive to the challenges that emerged during implementation in an urban elementary school context. Two features addressed structural challenges related to integrating inquiry into the ecology of the PLC: coupling inquiry with school rhythms and supporting design through development. Two features addressed conceptual challenges related to collaborative inquiry in the PLC: showing messages, not telling and incorporating family feedback. Finally, I discuss the configuration of the phases and features over the course of inquiry in the three collaboration contexts.
Activities at the Heart of Inquiry:

Designing: Showing, not telling messages. The designing phase was the focus of the inquiry cycle. Through collaborative talk, teachers designed a plan for teacher-family communication and represented their intended messages about literacy and stances. Over the course of inquiry, the work of designing included design of channels for communication (e.g., a newsletter) and particular design elements of those channels (e.g., placement and wording of family feedback questions).

Communicating comprehensible and meaningful messages to families was a focus of the design phase of inquiry. The staff at Fisher had participated in many years of professional development related to literacy, which gave the staff a breadth of vocabulary to discuss and advance their literacy practice (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). This vocabulary included reading skills like “main idea” or theme or structures like “guided reading” and progress monitoring” or curriculum like “Words their Way” and “Lucy Calkins.” The teachers had come to shared meaning about this shorthand through many meetings, and the shorthand was meaningful to talk to one another about their practice. However, such terms were not sufficient to make the real processes, purposes, and contexts of the work transparent to those outside of the field of education. When I asked the 4th grade team what they were doing in the classroom they would often use this professional shorthand as a description, “I put guided reading, small group instruction because students need to read at their level because they are transitioning students.” (Victoria, Whole Group Introductory Session, 1/30/15). “Well, right now we're working on theme and character.” (Susanna, Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 2/18/15). The communication design process facilitated the teachers’ sharing of the face of their practice (Little, 2002) with each other, and, in turn, and articulating it to families.
As a feature of the intervention, visual design was used both explicitly as a tool to consolidate thinking and implicitly as a mindset for the communication itself. Using images and nonlinear design afforded an opportunity to think with what Kress calls the logic of the screen, rather than the logic of the book (2003). This design process helped teachers make the familiar strange (Erickson, 1987) and consider how visual design could make their practice and thinking come alive for families. “Make it come alive” became a mantra of mine as the facilitator of the intervention, with 27 instances of some variation of the phrase occurring in my talk over the course of all the sessions.

A showing, not telling, mindset allowed teachers to simplify the complex details embodied in their professional shorthand. Professional developers supporting teachers in this work might consider three “showing” strategies to support teachers in tackling the challenge of communicating the complexity of their work. First, teachers can use visual models to depict strategies, focusing on adapting anchor charts and graphic organizers used to represent learning tasks in classroom instruction (Moorf & Readence, 1984). Second, teachers can use examples of student work and artifacts of student data to show student learning. Third, they can summarize the language of key questions from classroom instruction including: essential questions that drive units of instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), questions that support text comprehension (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Raphael & Au, 2005), and questions from student assessments. Each of these three strategies draw on classroom practices that make instruction clear and coherent.

Thus, while the designing phase provided a context for teachers to plan and look ahead in their practice, it also afforded opportunities for teachers to reflect on their knowledge-of-practice. In the design phase, teachers frequently engaged in replays and rehearsals of their practice (Horn, 2010). In replays, teachers recounted their words, actions, and thoughts about their past
motivations and experiences communicating with families. In rehearsals, teachers talked through the words, actions, and rationale for how they might communicate with families in the future. In the future, I would like to extend my analysis of the teacher talk in the design phase and examine how learning occurred when teachers show the face of their practice (Little, 2002). Using discourse analysis, I would like to examine the discourse strategies by which teachers probed one another for more details, the extent to which the replays and rehearsals brought the voices of teachers, students, and parents into the conversation (Horn & Kane, 2015), and the ways in which teachers demonstrated their epistemic stances towards literacy, students and families (Hall & Horn, 2012; Horn & Kane, 2015) in the context of their collaborative talk.

**Reflecting & analyzing: Incorporating family feedback.** The reflecting & analyzing phase focused on communication that was designed during inquiry to prompt and facilitate conversations that were productive for teacher learning (Kazemi & Hubbard, 2008). In most instances, the reflecting & analyzing phase focused on using family feedback to assess the effectiveness of the communication. We designed explicit feedback questions that were incorporated into print communication. In our collaborative talk we also unpacked other tacit feedback from families such as student homework completion and parent affect during workshops.

In general, teachers engaged in more substantive reflection on their practice during the design phase than in the reflecting & analyzing phase. The most substantive talk in the reflecting & analyzing phase occurred with the kindergarten team’s reflection on their parent data workshops. This is not surprising, as the kindergarten parent data workshops were the most complex, substantive instance of teacher-family communication enacted in the scope of the study. In that session, I used my field notes from observations of the workshops and questions
adapted from the Teacher-Family Communication Knowledge-of-Practice Rubric to scaffold reflection on the workshops. The study was conducted in the final 6 months of one school year, and it is possible that continuing the work for a longer time would have facilitated more opportunities for more complex communication and more substantive reflection & analysis in each of the contexts. Additional opportunities for reflection have the potential to support teachers in identifying opportunities to improve the quality and quantity of their communication.

In future research, I would like to explore supporting teachers’ deepening their reflection & analysis in two ways. First, I would like further develop and validate the Teacher-Family Communication Knowledge-of-Practice Rubric (see Table 7) as a tool to support teacher reflection. In this study, I analyzed print artifacts and field notes of observations. I would like to apply the rubric to video analysis of face-to-face communication practice and teachers’ uses of video to facilitate reflection on their communication practice.

Second, I would like to support teachers in more systematically and comprehensively assessing families’ interpretation of teacher-family communication. I designed this intervention to focus on teachers’ inquiry about their communication with families. In designing the study, I intentionally focused my data collection on teachers and did not directly collect data from or about families. I made this decision as part of my stance as co-researcher alongside the teachers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), and it allowed me to maintain a relationship of professional trust with the teachers. In future research, I would like to maintain this stance, but work to understand and problematize the families’ interpretations of teacher-family communication. I elaborate on this need later in this chapter in my discussion of teachers’ representation of messages to diverse families.
Supports to Propel Inquiry

(Re)Imagining: Setting a new course for teacher-family communication. As I anticipated, the (re)imagining phase was the time and space to develop shared knowledge and perspectives about the teacher-family communication design sequence. During the first macrocycle, we identified the focus and goals of inquiry in this phase (Pappas & Zecker, 2001). With this shift, goal setting for the inquiry moved out of the more theoretical (re)imagining phase and into the knowledge-of-practice-oriented designing and reflecting & analyzing phases.

As the external facilitator, I played a key role in the (re)imagining phase supporting teachers in developing an initial understanding about the message, stance, design, and context of their communication with families. However, teachers had the opportunity to develop their knowledge-of-practice (i.e., understanding the theory in relation to their practice) of these concepts in the work in the designing and reflecting & analyzing phases. In future iterations of the work, it might be more productive to structure the (re)imagining work as a full-day professional development session in advance of the job-embedded inquiry. In this setting, teachers could have more time and space to learn about the sequence theoretically and while receiving supports through each phase.

Development: Scaffolding design. The development phase of inquiry was identified analytically and emerged in response to structural challenges teachers encountered enacting communication. During the design phase of communication, I supported teachers in thinking through ideas for messages, stance, and visual design for communication. I gave teachers the onus to develop and enact communication as they saw fit because I wanted teachers to take ownership of the design process, not only the end communication we were attempting to design. However, it became evident that the teachers were not able to take ownership of the process if
they could not overcome barriers to realizing their designs. The development phase scaffolded teachers in accessing resources to enact their designs of teacher-family communication. While paper, technology troubleshooting, and translation were not inaccessible to teachers, the process of negotiating access to each of them added extra steps to the process and slowed down the enactment of teacher-family communication. For the 4th grade and kindergarten teams, I provided development support when a design for teacher-family communication was not enacted after two design sessions. Next, I discuss how development facilitated the access to the resources.

The 4th grade team’s inquiry focused on designing print communication. Classroom teachers were limited by the number of copies they were permitted to make each month, and these limits influenced their design decisions and process of development. Throughout the process they deliberated how to maximize information for families in two languages on the least amount of paper possible. In the first macrocycle, the teachers used the school scanner to reduce the size of the graphic organizers pictured on the newsletter, which meant they had to seek out the help of the computer teacher. These challenges did not prevent the 4th grade team from developing and enacting communication, but significantly delayed its enactment and impacted the frequency of the team’s communication with families. I created the 3-minute design generator and template to facilitate the process of development and scaffold teachers’ access of resources within the design process. Susanna reflected this in her final interview that this was the most helpful aspect of our collaboration, “just doing it. Not even that it was brief, but just being able to sit and do it and start the whole process. I mean it's kind of overwhelming so just kind of getting my feet wet in it” (Susanna, Final Interview, 6/17/15).
The development of the RAZ kids parent workshop also highlighted the kinds of issues teachers had to address to move from designing to enacting. First, they had to secure permission to host the workshop in the computer lab. Then the teachers had to familiarize themselves with the teacher and student user views of several available platforms to select one that would be the focus of the workshop. Finally, they had to come to shared meaning about the messages they wanted to deliver about the platform so that Gabriela could take lead in facilitating the session in Spanish and English.

I did not directly provide Rebecca with development support within our collaborative inquiry sessions. However, there is evidence that Rebecca sought out development support outside of our collaborative inquiry time: she used the 4th grade team’s communication as a model and she asked her colleague for feedback on her design. In her position as a coach and member of the administrative team, Rebecca also had a global perspective view of the resources available for communicating with families and more flexibility in her time to access them. She did not have the same limitations as the other teams: she did not need translation support and her limited intervention caseload did not require many photocopies.

Teachers need opportunities to develop knowledge of design principles and the resources to develop and enact communication. The results of this study suggest that teachers may benefit from time allocated to access those resources along with structured development support in using them to develop communication. The development process was not a quick fix, but instead served as a scaffold to allow teachers to appropriate the process into their repertoire of practice (Raphael et al., 2014). Although teachers may identify needs for new resources, the development phase of positions teachers as agents of the existing resources in the ecology of their learning community (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Wood, 2007).
Planning for collaboration: Coupling inquiry with the school rhythms. throughout the course of the intervention, challenges of time emerged that inhibited integration of the intervention into the ecology of the PLC. Issues of time made it difficult to implement our collaborative inquiry sessions and for teachers to move forward with developing and enacting the teacher-family communication we designed in the sessions. As the teachers and I planned for collaboration in most sessions, a feature of the intervention emerged: coupling inquiry with calendar cycles. Sociotemporal cycles have a strong influence in school culture (Connelley & Clandinin, 1990), and by working with the ebb and flow of the assessment, quarterly, and weekly cycles, there were possibilities to integrate inquiry about teacher-family communication design into the “cultural rhythm” of the PLC (Cambone, 1995).

In my initial planning meetings with the principal, I learned about the teachers’ weekly (e.g., grade level meetings) and daily cycles of responsibilities (e.g., student dismissal routines). However, as I engaged in collaboration with teachers I recognized the influence of the wider sociotemporal cycles (Bruno, 1997; Cambone, 1995) of professional responsibilities on the schedule including assessment, quarterly, and annual cycles. It took time during sessions for me to come to understand these cycles and their impact on our collaborative inquiry.

Teachers were continually engaged in cycles of assessment and data analysis, and each quarter brought rhythms of planning and grading student work. Some of these assessment cycles were annual (PARCC and ACCESS for ELL). Other benchmark assessment cycles were more frequent: Kindergarten administered TRC/DIBELS at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, 4th grade administered NWEA at the middle and end of the year, and curriculum-based assessment at the end of every quarter. Teachers in both grade levels were obligated to maintain cycles of progress monitoring for students not meeting established benchmarks. Each grade level
team was expected to plan and implement a quarterly unit that integrated content area literacy, updated with weekly lesson plans. Teachers graded student work and uploaded grades to the online grade-book in preparation for progress reports in the middle of each quarter and report cards at the end of each quarter. The quarterly responsibilities were most challenging for 4th grade, where two-thirds of the team was teaching the quarterly units for the first time.

In addition to assessment and quarterly responsibilities, annual cycles also brought on responsibilities such as IEP meetings, teacher evaluation observations and debriefing, and district walkthroughs. As Sally put it, “It’s not our time” (Audio Transcript, 4th Grade Session, 5/20/15). As an outsider, it took me time to unpack the layers of these rhythms and how they affected the work of each team.

The feature of coupling inquiry with school rhythms was evident in work with the both kindergarten and fourth grade teams. The kindergarten team’s cycle of parent data workshops followed their cycles of data collection and analysis. In the kindergarten team’s first macrocycle of inquiry with me, I was able to synchronize my supports to their work. Sharing my reflections and analysis of my observations allowed opportunities for reflection as they finished implementing the middle of the year workshops. Additionally, they felt validated by my feedback and encouraged in their efforts. Finally, our collaborative design of a parent survey about the data workshops provided an opportunity for systematic reflection on their practice and spurred the next cycle of inquiry. In the second macrocycle, the 4th grade team’s inquiry was coupled with the rhythm of weekly lesson planning for the quarterly unit plan. Although this team only designed and enacted one instance of communication in the macrocycle, they perceived this shift as a helpful means of integrating teacher-family communication design into their existing routines. As Sally commented in her final interview:
Sally’s perception of the time required to design communication for families shifted when she saw how it can be integrated into the team’s established lesson planning routine where they already talk about “what’s going on in the classroom” (line 3).

While it is common for personal experiences to motivate teachers’ family engagement (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003), the inquiry process provided structural supports that can allow teachers to sustain their motivation and preserve it in their collective practice in the PLC (Wood, 2007). Incorporating family feedback was an important component in the planning for collaboration phase; it was an essential means of propelling the inquiry cycles and integrating the inquiry into the school rhythms. When the teachers asked questions of families, they were eager to come back together and share their responses. This was in contrast to teachers’ initial descriptions of their motivations to communicate with families as personal. Gabriela, Rebecca, and Meghan spoke of their experience with their own families’ limited English and limited education as a motivator to engage families, while Sally attributed her teacher education program as instilling in her the importance of teacher-family communication.

The professional responsibilities for teachers are only increasing, but teachers have quite limited amounts of time in which to do them. This study highlights the importance of attending to teacher time in the structure of professional development. In looking for time for teachers to innovate and integrate new routines, professional developers should attend to the cultural rhythms of the school and look for ways to authentically propel and integrate collaborative
inquiry. These rhythms may not be evident in the daily and weekly schedules. Professional
developers should consider how rhythms afford the design of the communication for families by
providing messages to communicate. At the same time, they should consider how these rhythms
might constrain those messages and teachers’ inquiry work about it. The established calendar “is
resilient” (Cambone, 1995), and inquiry facilitators need to find ways to work within those
rhythms, and when necessary, advocating for change.

**Inquiry Phases Across Macrocycles**

Analysis across the three collaborative contexts of the fourth grade team, the coach, and
the kindergarten team, revealed that our inquiry involved the same phases of supports in different
proportions and different combinations. The phases of inquiry by macrocycle and in each
collaboration context are illustrated in Figure 27 and Figure 28.

Over half of the time in all three contexts teachers were engaged in examining their
practice through designing, reflecting & analyzing. As the coach and the kindergarten team had
more existing practice prior to the intervention, and were able to engage in more reflecting &
analyzing. In contrast, I spent more time scaffolding the 4th grade’s inquiry through
(re)imagining and developing. Across all three contexts, about 20% of the time was spent
supporting inquiry through (re)imagining, developing, and planning for inquiry.

My study only included teachers from two grade levels and one literacy coach. While
contrasts and differences emerged between the three teams, it is possible that teachers from other
grade levels would have had different challenges or successes resulting in different findings.
Figure 27. Phases of Inquiry by Macrocycle in each Collaboration Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase
- (Re)imagining
- Planning for Collaboration
- Designing
- Developing
- Reflecting & Analyzing
Figure 28. Phases of Inquiry in each Collaboration Context
In future work, I would like to expand the intervention to other grade levels and span an entire school organization. I am interested to know how the process would work with middle school and high school teachers as perceptions and expectations change for family involvement (Mapp et al., 2008).

The need for supports to propel inquiry raises issues of sustainability of the work in the absence of an external facilitator. I would like to explore the potential of engaging leaders as co-facilitators of teacher inquiry. Work with leaders and teachers could potentially integrate the work with other efforts to engage families such parent councils (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007) and parent education programs (Rodríguez-Brown, 2009). If leaders are willing to take on an inquiry stance alongside teachers, it may potentially widen the horizon of the inquiry. If leaders drive the mission and vision of the school (Bryk et al., 2010), their participation can afford the inquiry to more directly probe the intended learning purposes and goals and the vision of the graduate and consider ways to incorporate attention to families in the context of their existing collaborative work such as team meetings.

While I recruited Rebecca as a leader in the study, she engaged in the inquiry as the teacher of intervention students. In future work, I would work to support leader learning more explicitly in preparation for and during inquiry. While this may complicate a school’s willingness to participate in such an intervention, to work towards truly equitable partnerships between schools, families, and communities, such conversations are necessary (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2016; Comer, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990).

**Issues of Design Methodology for Professional Learning**

I designed this study to learn more about supporting teachers’ knowledge-of-practice within collaborative inquiry about teacher-family communication. For the past ten years, my
work as an educator has focused on professional development: supporting teachers directly through coaching and professional development and indirectly through research and evaluation. In conducting this design experiment, I was able to take on both of these roles. It was my privilege to collaborate side-by-side with thoughtful, dedicated, professionals, and build joint knowledge and collaborations to support teacher-family communication (Yaden Jr & Tam, 2000).

As part of my stance as a collaborator, I prioritized negotiation of issues of sustainability over dramatic innovation. I did not want teachers to create an “ideal” communication that could not be continued without my support, but to see teacher-family communication as a doable practice. For the kindergarten team, this meant a focus on recognizing their existing practices. As Gabriela commented in her final interview, “It helped me realize with your presence and your questions and you wanting to see the workshops, realized everything that we do and we do a lot more than we think we do” (Gabriela, Final Interview, 6/19/15). For the coach and the 4th grade, this meant finding quick ways to open and continue conversations with families.

The design methodology literature emphasizes the importance of researchers initially immersing themselves in school contexts, usually for a few weeks, to develop a deep understanding of the teachers and school (Plomp, 2007; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). My experience in this study was that understanding the context of teachers’ broader practice is an ongoing endeavor. It started two years before the study and continued through the final interviews. In one sense, this time was needed to understand how practice changes with the rhythms of the school year, but it was also a matter of building trust with the teachers and proving that my support was actually helpful and not just another thing to do. The continued
“importance of the mutual exchange of information” (Yaden Jr & Tam, 2000, p. 14) cannot be underestimated in design based research focused on professional learning.

**Teachers as Designers of Communication**

At the beginning of the study, all of the participating teachers readily agreed about the importance of communicating with families, but it was through attention to the design and context of their communication that teachers could actually engage in the work of examining their communication practice with families. To what extent did attention to radically small details of design and context serve to realize the design paradigm? There is evidence that the inquiry facilitated teachers’ knowledge-of-practice about the two foundational approaches in the design paradigm (Edwards & Piazza, 2013; Wiley, 1996): adaptation and accommodation (see Figure 7). Teachers engaged in *adaptation* approaches as they made classroom teaching and learning visible to families through print communication and face-to-face workshops. These approaches were designed to “equip” families with information about school literacy practice to help diverse families understand the expectations and processes necessary to demonstrate literacy in school (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Teachers engaged in *accommodation* approaches when they sought out families’ perspectives on their communication and the literacy curriculum, but these approaches were largely school centric and did not necessarily represent the perspectives of all families. To further realize the design paradigm, inquiry would need to move beyond strictly school-centric issues of congruence between the school and the home (Serpell, 1997) and seek deeper understanding of families’ perspectives and experiences (González et al., 2005). In the next sections, I discuss issues of equity in teacher-family communication design and practical implications for teacher-family communication.
Issues of Equity in Teacher-Family Communication Design

In future research and analysis of this data set, I intend to further explore three issues related to issues of equity in teacher-family communication design: (a) the influence of teachers’ individual backgrounds and team contexts; (b) the role of assessment in teacher-family communication; and (c) the complex interplay between messages, stances, design, and context in communication for equity. In this section, I briefly elaborate on each issue.

The influence of teachers’ individual backgrounds and team contexts. Four dimensions of teachers’ individual backgrounds and their team contexts informed their existing practices of communicating with families and influenced their participation in inquiry. First, of the 7 teachers, 5 were bilingual Latinas who shared language and culture with families. For some teachers’ their own childhood experiences of school-family relationship influenced their motivation to support families, while for others it was their adult experiences as a parent or professional. Second, the kindergarten team could be characterized as a professional learning community that engages in joint work with collaborative norms and accountability to one another (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). In contrast, the 4th grade was a newly formed team and still establishing their collaborative norms, and the affordances and constraints of team collaboration were largely removed from my individual collaboration with the coach. Third, the early childhood setting of kindergarten there were greater institutional, cultural, and historical expectations for parent involvement and communication than the intermediate context of the 4th grade team and the coach (Nichols, Nixon, & Rowsell, 2009; I. Reyes, Iddings, & Feller, 2015). Finally, all of the teachers shared the professional experience of working in a climate of accountability with intense pressures to improve student performance (Payne, 2008; Valli &
Buese, 2007). In future analysis and research, I would like to explore how backgrounds and contexts influenced teachers’ inquiry and their wider communication practice.

**The role of assessment in teacher-family communication.** The history of reforms discussed in chapters 1 and 2 is a reminder that the push for assessments was, in part, driven by the need to make what happens in schools transparent to families and communities. Thus, it is ironic that the pervasiveness of assessments and assessment data effectively constrained the value of teachers’ incorporation of families’ literacies into the classroom. In linguistically diverse communities the pressures to improve test scores are great as schools are challenged to overcome historical deficits (Abedi, 2004).

The assessment defined literacy for the kindergarten and 4th grade teachers. Although literacy instruction was embedded in content-area units, the final assessments were unrelated to the content. The assessments required students to apply reading skills to new texts and different content areas, effectively de-emphasizing the genre and the content during classroom instruction. The emphasis on well-defined skills facilitated the kindergarten teachers’ communication about the skill, but did not facilitate dialogue about how the skills might be applied in the home and community. In other words, since teachers did not grapple with how or if the content and genre mattered for literacy in the classroom, it was challenging for them to articulate how the family literacy context might differ from the classroom.

While I designed this study to work within Fisher’s existing curriculum and assessments, collaboration with schoolwide leaders and teacher teams could afford the possibility to challenge and transform curriculum and assessments. The conversation that Alicia described with her student’s mother, gives me hope multiple channels of dialogue with families might provide a
“place” for nondominant families and teachers to grapple with and reframe these pressures (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2016, p. 21).

The complex interplay between messages, stances, design, and context in communication for equity. Analysis of teacher’s knowledge-of-practice revealed a complex interplay between message and stance in the design and context of communication. A comparison of the kindergarten parent data workshops and the 4th grade parent leader interview illustrates some of these complexities. Some scholars have criticized the parent training approach as an imposition of power where teachers and schools disregard families’ multiple literacies and impose school-based literacies on nondominant families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Goldenberg, 1987). I had similar concerns when the kindergarten team positioned their data workshops as “trainings.” However, my analysis revealed nuances in their communication stance and processes. As teachers constructed and enacted communication that gave instructions to families, I observed them effectively representing the face of their classroom practice for families. Teachers then relied on a repertoire of communication channels to elicit families’ interpretations of their messages including families’ engagement in home learning activities, conversations at dismissal, and written notes home.

On the other hand, the design of the 4th grade parent leader interview about leaders of change offered a culturally responsive opportunity for families to share their own knowledge, beliefs, and literacies. However, the 4th grade context revealed more limited strategies for soliciting and, subsequently, accommodating families’ perspectives. I encouraged teachers to seek feedback from families through multiple means (see Figure 29), but the teachers did not do so in a systematic way. While the teachers were pleased with the parent responses, the response rate varied. What about the parents who did not respond? Victoria commented that the interview
helped her realize that many parents were more educated than she expected, but we did not have the opportunity to interrogate her assertion. Does only positive news about parents “count” as helpful? What about the parents who did not respond? How can we reach out to them? In future work, I would like to expand this support to more systematically support teachers in designing opportunities to reach and reflect on “hard to reach” families.

**Radically Small: Practical Implications for Teacher-Family Communication Design**

I describe the scope of teachers’ design and examination of practice to be *radically small* in that it utilized micro-level analysis to unpack larger issues of messages for and stances towards families. We engaged in deliberate, rational inquiry focused on specific instances of communication to support teachers’ attention to their communication. Inquiry focused on rational design of a few instances of communication, with the hope that this radically small attention and focus can influence teachers’ attention to the metafunctions in other aspects of their communication practice. Professional developers and practitioners can consider several radically small ways to incorporate attention to teacher-family communication.

**Design real, not ideal, communication.** The goal of the design process was to design real communication for teachers to enact, not to create impossible ideals that could not be sustained. Fisher had a number of common communication routines and resources in place including open house, parent-teacher conferences, online reading platforms, and online grade-books. In the kindergarten context, our inquiry examined and designed the messages, stances, design, and context of each channel existing communication opportunities so as to enhance them. In the 4th grade and coach contexts, we designed simple new routines of print communication to invite families into aspects of the school that were previously opaque. The important take away
is to design, engage, and reflect on communication, with the goal that there will be multiple opportunities to do it better.

**Design simple, yet meaningful, communication.** The design and context of communication shape the message and stance of communication. Teachers’ should attend to the radically small details, including vocabulary, point of view, and modes used to make communication more comprehensible, engaging, and inviting. Focusing on showing, not telling can be a useful mantra to design communication with concise and clear language while maximizing the use of visuals such as photographs, graphic organizers, and student work. Face-to-face communication should limit lecturing and employ multiple modes of communication. Each instance of communication should be designed and delivered in context and connection other ongoing communication that is accessible to all families.

**Design all teacher-family communication to be two-way.** All communication with families should be two-way, providing some opportunity for families to make their interpretations known to teachers and keep the door open for families to initiate communication. In this study, incorporating family feedback into the design of communication increased the opportunities for two-way communication with families. At the start of the intervention, two-way communication was primarily confined to face-to-face communication. Since the kindergarten team had multiple opportunities for face-to-face communication, families had as many opportunities to initiate communication with teachers. In contrast, the 4th grade team and Rebecca had limited face-to-face contact with families and so families had few opportunities for two-way communication. As in many schools, Fisher teachers’ used parent signatures to ensure that parents received important communication that was sent home. However, parent signatures evoke an institutional rather than partnership stance. Practitioners can incorporate more
meaningful, open-ended family feedback questions into print and digital communication to keep the conversation focused on students and learning. They should also be mindful of inviting families’ interpretations during face-to-face and other interactive communication.

Conclusion

As Gravemeijer and Cobb remind us, “if you want to change something, you have to understand it, and if you want to understand something, you have to change it” (2006, p. 17). In the same spirit, the current study had both practical and theoretical aims. Practically, my analysis of the intervention helped me to identify features that integrate the inquiry process and facilitate teacher-family communication knowledge-of-practice. Examining the knowledge-of-practice of three teams revealed a range of practices by which teachers engaged families in two-way communication.

Theoretically, my focus on teacher-family communication knowledge-of-practice contributes to our understanding of expanded views of practice in professional learning communities. Cochran-Smith and Lytle remind us that this expanded view of practice does not entail adding to the burgeoning responsibilities of teachers, but taking a new outlook:

“We are not suggesting that an expanded view of practice results from adding teachers' activity outside the classroom to what they do inside but, rather, that what goes on inside the classroom is profoundly altered and ultimately transformed when teachers' frameworks for practice foreground the intellectual, social, and cultural contexts of teaching.” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 276)

Thus, in this study I sought to support teachers in positioning teacher-family communication as a radically small, but integral layer of their literacy instructional practice where teachers, families
and schools (re)imagine a new paradigm where communication moves beyond the transmission of information *about literacy* to mobilize a shared partnership *for literacy*. 
## APPENDIX A

### Teacher-Family Communication Knowledge-of-Practice Rubric

#### Table 7. Teacher-Family Communication Knowledge-of-Practice Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta-functions</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>More</th>
<th>To be</th>
<th>To Achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message</strong></td>
<td>Conceptual Messages about Literacy</td>
<td>Unstructured description unconnected to purposes and goals</td>
<td>Analytically structured representation that represents interconnections and interdependence of how the knowledge, skills, and dispositions are enacted now</td>
<td>Principled</td>
<td>Learning Purposes &amp; Goals: Literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can be utilized flexibly across culturally and linguistically diverse contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction</strong></td>
<td>Narrative Messages about Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>Circumstantial narrative unconnected to vision</td>
<td>Process narratives of students' development towards fully literate members of the community and society</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Vision of the Graduate: Individual students' process of development towards fully literate members of the community and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stance</strong></td>
<td>Social Values and Beliefs enacted between students, teachers, and families</td>
<td>Opaque practice</td>
<td>Transparent Professional Responsibility</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Vision of School Culture: Teachers seek to build partnership through communication with and engagement of families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Complicated jargon</td>
<td>Comprehensible, simplified language</td>
<td>Comprehensible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Directionality</td>
<td>Predominately linguistic communication</td>
<td>Multimodal Communication (i.e., linguistic &amp; visual)</td>
<td>Two-Way</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of the Text</td>
<td>Constructed by teachers</td>
<td>Co-constructed by teachers, families, and students</td>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Quality Teacher-Family Communication: Ongoing, intentional communication through multiple two-way communication channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navigation to Channel</td>
<td>Lack of organization</td>
<td>Purposeful organization</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Context of Other Communication</td>
<td>Disconnected to other communication</td>
<td>Communication channel is accessible to all families</td>
<td>Connected</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Untimely</td>
<td>Timely</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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APPENDIX B

Handouts for Teachers

Figure 29. Ethos and Technical Questions Reflection Questions

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More personal tone focused on students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less general descriptions and commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical:</td>
<td>More intentional, simplified language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less complicated language and jargon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More showing meaning through images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less telling through text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is it Responsive? Is it Engaging?
Assess the responsiveness of communication.

Ask & Listen
- Micro-survey
- Micro-interview
- Simple Task

Look & Listen
- Observe

Figure 30. Technical Reflection Questions

Essential Technical Questions for Communication with Families

Is it Responsive?
Time:
When do families need or want use it?
When do you give it to families?

Place and Platform:
Where do families need or want to use it?
Where do families get it?

Navigation:
Can all families access the text?
How do families get around within the text?
Figure 31. School-Family Communication Generator

Figure 32. 3-Minute Design PowerPoint Template
Participants also received copies of two books:


2. *Creative Workshop: 80 Challenges to Sharpen Your Design Skills* (Sherwin, 2010). This support supported knowledge building on social semiotic theory (Kress, 2011) and the principles of visual design (Dabner et al., 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) through challenges designed to hone graphic design skills and think outside communicating linguistically. Each challenge is illustrated with color sketches and prototypes produced by real graphic designers under the same challenge conditions. The challenges served as warm up activities, illustrations of design principles, or structures for the design process as needed.
APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Initial Interview Protocol

BACKGROUND

• Tell me about your current responsibilities.
• What brought you to this profession?
• What kinds of preparation and coursework have you had in literacy? In engaging families?
• In what ways did your childhood experiences with your family and school influence who you are as an educator? Influence how you approach literacy? How you approach family engagement?

CONCEPTIONS OF LITERACY

• What is literacy? What does it mean to be literate in the 21st century?
• What should students know and be able to do in literacy when they leave this school?
• What aspects of literacy has your school targeted over the past two or three years? To what extent have these targets been dictated by policy changes (e.g., new assessments)?
• Describe the contexts in which you discuss literacy instruction with your colleagues.

BELIEFS ABOUT FAMILIES

• In your opinion, what are families’ primary responsibilities in educating their child? In supporting their children in school?
• What are the school’s responsibilities in engaging families in school?
• What kinds of literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions should families instill in their children before they come to school? Support while they are in school?
• Ideally, how would the school engage families in communication? What kinds of communication would you like families to initiate?

EXPERIENCES ENGAGING FAMILIES

• In what ways do you currently engage families in communication? What is most successful? Most challenging?
• What barriers keep families from getting engaged?
• What barriers keep you or other staff members from engaging all families?
• How has communication with families changed over the past year or two in this school?
• What kinds of supports around family engagement do you receive or provide? Do you see a need for?

Final Interview Protocol

Semi-Structured Protocol

LITERACY

• At Fisher you have four dimensions of your literacy program: guided reading, words their way, the Common Core Units, and writing. Could you briefly describe the goal of each dimension and why you think it is important?
• Which dimension was the focus of your work within the professional learning community? Why? What do you see as the focus for next year?

LITERACY AND FAMILIES

• Which of these dimensions is most transparent for families? Which did you communicate the most/least with families? Why? What do you see as the focus for next year?
• What role should families play in supporting their children’s development of these four dimensions of literacy?
• What outcomes do you want to see from communication with families? What do you want families to be able to do with the information that you give them?

FAMILY LITERACY BY DESIGN REFLECTIONS

• Imagine you had to explain this process to another teacher or leader, what would you say?
• Have you had any aha moments in this process?
  o What do you consider to be your most successful design of communication?
• What worked well in terms of structure and/or content of the work? What was a challenge?
  o What recommendations do you have for the structure and/or content of the work?
  o How would you suggest structuring time to learn and innovate with time to complete and draft communication? Which would you prefer to do collaboratively? Individually?
• To what extent will you adapt and apply this process in your future communication with families?
  o What supports do you still need to successfully engage families in communication?
• Anything else
  o Of all the things we’ve talked about, what was the most important to you?
  o What was the most thought provoking?
  o What aspects do you have questions about?
What aspects do you find troubling?

Principal Final Interview Protocol

Family Literacy by Design Development Study

Principal Interview

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

• Tell me about your background as a professional educator and how your experiences with families throughout your career.
• In what ways did your childhood experiences with your family and school influence who you are as an educator? Influence how you approach literacy? How you approach family engagement

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AT FISHER

• Tell me about the history of family and community engagement at Fisher?
  o Murals? Family Classes
• What kinds of supports around family engagement do you receive from the district and network? Or community organizations?
• In what ways do you encourage teachers to engage families in communication?
  o What is most successful? Most challenging?
• What outcomes do you want to see from communication with families? What do you want families to be able to do with the information that you give them?
• What barriers keep staff from communicating with all families?
• What barriers keep families from getting engaged?

LITERACY

• At Fisher you have four dimensions of your literacy program: guided reading, words their way, the Common Core Units, and writing in addition to the bilingual program. Could you briefly describe the goal of each dimension and why you think it is important?
• Which dimension was the focus of your work within the professional learning community? Why? What do you see as the focus for next year?

LITERACY AND FAMILIES

• Which of these dimensions is most transparent for families? Which did you see teachers communicate the most/least with families? Why? What do you see as the focus for next year?
• What role should families play in supporting their children’s development of these four dimensions of literacy?

**FAMILY LITERACY BY DESIGN REFLECTIONS**

• Why did you want your teachers to participate in this project?
  o Why did you suggest for the kindergarten and fourth grade teams to participate this year?
• What have you noticed about their communication with families during the process?
• To what extent will you adapt and apply this process in your future communication with families?
• Anything else
  o Of all the things we’ve talked about, what was the most important to you?
  o What was the most thought provoking?
  o What aspects do you have questions about?
  o What aspects do you find troubling?
APPENDIX D

School and Family Partnership & Literacy Orientation Survey

The survey is adapted from the School and Family Partnership Teacher Questionnaire (Epstein & Salinas, 1993) and the Literacy Orientation Survey (Lenski et al., 1998). The survey was administered before and after the intervention.

Hosted on

Q1 Thank you for your participation in the Family Literacy by Design Development Study. This survey will take about 30 minutes to complete. The results will remain completely confidential.

The survey has two sections: 1) Family Engagement, 2) Literacy and Literacy Instruction, and

Q2 What is your first and last name?

Q3 In my current position...

☐ I teach primary grade students. (1)
☐ I teach intermediate grade students. (2)
☐ I teach both primary and intermediate students. (4)
☐ I am not a classroom teacher. (3)

Q4 In your own words, describe the position you hold in your school this year.
Q5 **Family Engagement** The following questions are about your experiences and beliefs about engaging families in your school.

Q6 These questions ask for your professional judgment about family engagement. Please select the choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Agree (3)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement is important for a good school. (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home (2)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school has an active and effective parent organization. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school. (4)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All parents could learn ways to assist their children on schoolwork at home, if shown how. (5)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students. (6)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should receive more recognition for time spent on parent involvement activities. (7)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels. (8)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways. (9)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices. (10)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement is important for student success in school. (11)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school views parents as important partners. (12)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community values education for all students. (13)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school. (14)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly when I contact parents, it’s about problems or trouble. (15)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, teachers play a large part in most decisions. (16)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community supports this school. (17)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents. (18)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7 Teachers contact their students’ families in different ways. Please estimate the percent of your students’ families that you contacted within the last year in these ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>N/A (1)</th>
<th>5% (2)</th>
<th>10% (3)</th>
<th>25% (4)</th>
<th>50% (5)</th>
<th>75% (6)</th>
<th>90% (7)</th>
<th>All (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter or memo (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting at school (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report card pick-up (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled parent-teacher conference (7)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Meeting (8)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visit (9)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting in the Community (10)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSC, BAC, or NCLB Parent Meeting (11)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances, sports, or other events (12)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8 Teachers choose among many activities to assist their students and families. Select one choice to tell how important each of these is for you at your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not Important (1)</th>
<th>A Little Important (2)</th>
<th>Pretty Important (3)</th>
<th>Very Important (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a conference with each of my students’ parents at least once a year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend evening performances, meetings, and workshops with families at the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact families about their children’s problems or failures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform parents when their children do something well or improve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve some families as volunteers in my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform families of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform families how report card grades are earned in my class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide specific activities for children and families to do to improve students’ grades.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide ideas for discussing TV shows, websites, or apps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign homework that requires children to interact with families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask families to listen to their children read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask families to listen to a story or a paragraph that their children write.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with other teachers to develop family involvement activities and materials.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with area businesses for volunteers to improve programs for students in the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request information from families on their children’s talents, interests, or needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve on the LSC, NCLB or BAC committee with families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 In your opinion, how important is it that families in your school do the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not Important (1)</th>
<th>A Little Important (2)</th>
<th>Pretty Important (3)</th>
<th>Very Important (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send children to school ready to learn. (1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach children to behave well. (2)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up a quiet place and time for studying at home. (3)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage children to volunteer in class. (4)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what children are expected to learn each year. (5)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check daily that homework is done. (6)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to children about what they are learning in school. (7)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home. (8)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend LSC, NCLB, or BAC committee meetings. (9)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as a volunteer in the school or classroom. (10)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend assemblies or other special events at the school. (11)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take children to special places or events in the community. (12)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to children about the importance of school. (13)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10 How do you perceive others’ support for family engagement in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Level</th>
<th>No Support (1)</th>
<th>Weak Support (2)</th>
<th>Some Support (3)</th>
<th>Strong Support (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You, personally (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other leaders (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others in the Community (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Network Leadership (7)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS Central Leadership (8)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q11 Literacy and Literacy Instruction
Read the following statements, and circle the response that indicates your feelings or behaviors regarding literacy and literacy instruction. If you do not directly conduct literacy instruction, answer the behavior questions according to how you encourage teachers in this school to conduct their literacy instruction.

Q12 The purpose of reading instruction is to teach children to recognize words and pronounce them correctly.

○ Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q13 When students read text, I ask them questions such as “What does it mean?”

○ Never 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ Always 5 (5)

Q14 Reading and writing are unrelated processes.

○ Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q15 When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of instruction by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.

○ Never 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ Always 5 (5)

Q16 Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.
Q17 I schedule time every day for self-selected reading and writing experiences.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q18 Students should use “fix-up strategies” such as rereading when text meaning is unclear.

- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q19 Teachers should read aloud to students on a daily basis.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q20 I always encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q21 I use a variety of rereading strategies with my students.

- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q22 It is not necessary for students to write text on a daily basis.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q23 Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q24 The purpose of reading is to understand print.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q25 I allow students to compose text using computers and other technology during literacy instruction.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q26 I organize my classroom so that my students have an opportunity to write in at least one subject every day.
Q27 I ask students critically select and read online texts.
- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q28 Writers in my classroom generally move through a workshop process to plan, revise, and publish their writing.
- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q29 In my class, I organize reading, writing, speaking, and listening around key concepts.
- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q30 Reading instruction should always be delivered in mini-lessons to the whole class at the same time.
- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q31 I teach using themes or integrated units.

Q32 Grouping for reading instruction should always be based on students’ reading levels.
- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q33 Subjects and standards should be integrated across the curriculum.
- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q34 I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group, and individual instruction.
- Never 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Always 5 (5)

Q35 When students read text, I ask them questions such as “What does it mean?”
- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q36 Students need to write for a variety of purposes.
Q37 I take advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching by attending professional conferences and/or graduate classes and by reading professional journals.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q38 Technology is changing what it means to be literate

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q39 The major purpose of reading assessment is to determine a student’s reading level.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q40 I assess my student’s reading progress primarily by assessments required by my school.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q41 Children’s exposure to media and technology affects their attitudes towards reading and writing.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)

Q42 At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.

- Strongly Disagree 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- Strongly Agree 5 (5)
Thank you for your participation in the Family Literacy by Design Development Study. Please take a few minutes to tell me about your personal background.

Q43 Education and Experience

Q44 what was your major or area of concentration for each level of schooling you have completed?

Bachelor’s Degree (1)
Master’s Degree 1 (2)
Master’s Degree 2 (3)
Doctoral Degree (4)
Other degree(s) (5)

Q45 in what areas do you hold teaching certificates or endorsements?

Certificate/Endorsement 1 (1)
Certificate/Endorsement 2 (2)
Certificate/Endorsement 3 (3)
Certificate/Endorsement 4 (4)
Certificate/Endorsement 5 (5)
Certificate/Endorsement 6 (6)
Certificate/Endorsement 7 (7)
Certificate/Endorsement 8 (8)
Certificate/Endorsement 9 (9)
Certificate/Endorsement 10 (10)

Q46 Please describes the number of years you have been employed by a Pre-K-12 school, including this school year. How many years have you...
been employed in a school? (1)
been employed at your current school? (2)
worked with primary grade students (pre-k-2)? (3)
worked with intermediate grade students (3rd - 5th)? (4)
worked with middle school students (6th-8th)? (5)
worked with high school students (9th-12th)? (6)
been employed as an administrator? (7)
been employed in a school as neither an administrator or classroom teacher? (8)
been employed in an urban school? (9)
been employed in a suburban school? (10)
been employed in a rural school? (11)
been employed in a public, neighborhood school? (12)
been employed in a public magnet school? (13)
been employed in a public charter school? (14)
been employed in a public alternative school? (15)
been employed in a private independent school? (16)
been employed in a parochial or other religious-affiliated school? (17)
been employed in a school serving 60% or more low SES students? (18)

Q47 How many schools have you worked in during your career?

Q48 Are you a parent?

☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

Answer If Are you a parent? Yes Is Selected

Q49 Family Information

Answer If Are you a parent? Yes Is Selected

Q50 How many children do you have?

Answer If Are you a parent? Yes Is Selected

Q51 What are the ages of your children?

Answer If Are you a parent? Yes Is Selected

Q52 In what type(s) of schools have you/will you enroll your children in?
Answer If Are you a parent? Yes Is Selected

Q53 Do any of your children currently attend the school where you are employed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q54 Personal Information

Q55 Select your age range.

- 22-30 (1)
- 31-40 (2)
- 41-50 (3)
- 51+ (4)

Q56 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q57 Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don’t know. (3)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What is your race? You may name more ...

Q58 Which one of these best describes you...

- Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano (1)
- Puerto Rican (2)
- Cuban, or (3)
- another Spanish/Hispanic/Latino group? Please specify (4) ____________________
- I don’t know. (5)

Q59 What is your race? You may name more than one if you like.
Q59 What is your race?

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native. Please specify. (3) ____________________
- Asian Indian (4)
- Chinese (5)
- Filipino (6)
- Japanese (7)
- Korean (8)
- Vietnamese (9)
- Asian not specified above. (10)
- Native Hawaiian (11)
- Guamanian or Chamorro (12)
- Samoan (13)
- Other Pacific Islander. Please specify. (14) ____________________
- Another race (15)
- I don’t know. (16)

Q60 What is your current status?

- Single, never married (1)
- Married (2)
- Divorced (3)
- Separated (4)
- Widowed (5)
- Living with partner (6)
- In a civil union (7)
Q61 Which languages, other than English, do you speak? If “none,” skip the question.

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<td>Write the name of each language.</td>
<td>Rate your proficiency. Click here for more info on the ILR scale.</td>
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<td>I speak this language with children or families in my school. (1)</td>
<td>I do not speak this language with children or families in my school. (2)</td>
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## APPENDIX F

### School and Family Partnership & Literacy Orientation Survey Results

Table 8. Summary of Pre- and Post- LOS Survey Responses

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<th></th>
<th>Pre-Total</th>
<th>Pre-Beliefs</th>
<th>Pre-Practice</th>
<th>Post-Total</th>
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<th>Post-Practice</th>
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<td>60</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
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<td>63</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>61</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>126.00</td>
<td>58</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>109.00</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>108.00</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>101.00</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>113.00</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leaders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>109.00</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>109.00</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>107.00</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
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**Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>30-109</td>
<td>15-56</td>
<td>15-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eclectic</td>
<td>110-124</td>
<td>56-64</td>
<td>54-59</td>
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<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>125-145</td>
<td>65-75</td>
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Table 9. Summary of School & Family Partnership Pre-Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Teacher Attitudes towards Family Engagement</th>
<th>Teachers' Value of Practices to Engage Families</th>
<th>Teacher Reports of Parent Responsibilities</th>
<th>Teacher Views of Support for Family Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaghan</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<th>4th Grade</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.77</td>
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<td>Susanna</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.75</td>
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<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>2.75</td>
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Table 10. Summary of School & Family Post-Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Teacher Attitudes towards Family Engagement</th>
<th>Teachers' Value of Practices to Engage Families</th>
<th>Teacher Reports of Parent Responsibilities</th>
<th>Teacher Views of Support for Family Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4.00</td>
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<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaghan</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>4th Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.23</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Leaders</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Teacher Attitudes towards Family engagement are coded from a low of 1 (strongly disagree to a high of 4 (strongly agree).
- Teachers’ Value of practices to engage families are coded from a low of 1 (not important to a high of 4 (very important).
- Teacher Reports of Parent Responsibilities are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).
- Teacher Views of Support for Family Partnerships are coded from a low of 1 (no support) to a high of 4 (strong support).
### Table 11. Teachers’ Report of Percent of Families Contacted by Communication Channel Pre-Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Communication Channel</th>
<th>Alicia</th>
<th>Meaghan</th>
<th>Sally</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Susanna</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Rebecca</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Letter or memo</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting at school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report card pick-up</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scheduled parent-teacher conference</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IEP Meeting</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home visit</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting in the Community</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LSC, BAC, or NCLB Parent Meeting</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Performances, sports, or other events</td>
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### Table 12. Teachers’ Report of Percent of Families Contacted by Communication Channel Post-Survey Results

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Communication Channel</th>
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<th>Meaghan</th>
<th>Sally</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Susanna</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Rebecca</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Letter or memo</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Report card pick-up</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Performances, sports, or other events</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

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APPENDIX G

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

Exemption Granted

August 15, 2014

Jaime Madison Vasquez, MEd
Curriculum and Instruction

RE: Research Protocol # 2014-0678
“Family Literacy by Design Development Study”

Sponsors: None

Please be reminded of the need to obtain Chicago Public Schools Research Review Board (CPS RRB) approval of this research. Upon receipt, please submit – via amendment – a copy of the CPS RRB approval notice to OPRS for review. This research cannot be initiated until written approval of the amendment has been granted.

Dear Jaime Madison Vasquez:

Your Claim of Exemption was reviewed on August 15, 2014 and it was determined that your research meets the criteria for exemption.

Exemption Period: August 15, 2014 – August 15, 2017
Performance Site: UIC
Recruitment Site: Fisher Dual Language Academy
Subject Population: Adult (18+ years) subjects only
Number of Subjects: 50

The specific exemption categories under 45 CFR 46.101(b) are:
(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods; and
(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipt Date</th>
<th>Submission Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>07/18/2014</td>
<td>Initial Review</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>08/04/2014</td>
<td>Modifications Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/2014</td>
<td>Response to Modifications</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>08/15/2014</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
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You are reminded that investigators whose research involving human subjects is determined to be exempt from the federal regulations for the protection of human subjects still have responsibilities for the ethical conduct of the research under state law and UIC policy. Please be aware of the following UIC policies and responsibilities for investigators:

1. **Amendments** You are responsible for reporting any amendments to your research protocol that may affect the determination of the exemption and may result in your research no longer being eligible for the exemption that has been granted.

2. **Record Keeping** You are responsible for maintaining a copy all research related records in a secure location in the event future verification is necessary, at a minimum these documents include: the research protocol, the claim of exemption application, all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions and/or data collection instruments associated with this research protocol, recruiting or advertising materials, any consent forms or information sheets given to subjects, or any other pertinent documents.

3. **Final Report** When you have completed work on your research protocol, you should submit a final report to the Office for Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS).

4. **Information for Human Subjects** UIC Policy requires investigators to provide information about the research protocol to subjects and to obtain their permission prior to their participating in the research. The information about the research protocol should be presented to subjects in writing or orally from a written script. When appropriate, the following information must be provided to all research subjects participating in exempt studies:

   a. The researchers’ affiliation; UIC, JBVMAC or other institutions,
   b. The purpose of the research,
   c. The extent of the subject’s involvement and an explanation of the procedures to be followed,
   d. Whether the information being collected will be used for any purposes other than the proposed research,
   e. A description of the procedures to protect the privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of the research information and data,
   f. Description of any reasonable foreseeable risks,
g. Description of anticipated benefit,
h. A statement that participation is voluntary and subjects can refuse to participate or can stop at any time,
i. A statement that the researcher is available to answer any questions that the subject may have and which includes the name and phone number of the investigator(s).
j. A statement that the UIC IRB/OPRS or JBVMAC Patient Advocate Office is available if there are questions about subject’s rights, which includes the appropriate phone numbers.

Please be sure to:

→ Use your research protocol number (2014-0678) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the OPRS office at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-2908. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Hoehne, B.S., C.I.P.
Assistant Director
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

cc: Kimberly Lawless, Curriculum and Instruction, M/C 147
    Taffy Raphael, Curriculum and Instruction, M/C 147
Works Cited


Colwell, J. (2012). *A formative experiment to promote disciplinary literacy in middle school and pre-service teacher education through blogging*. (Doctoral Dissertation), From Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order No. [11809]).


https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143211408453


https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410200200205


https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023004297


https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4369.2009.00519.x


Noguerón-Liu, S., Hall, D., & Smagorinsky, P. (2017). Building on immigrant parents’ repertoires: Scaffolding online home-school communication in New Latin@ Diaspora


VITA

JAIME MADISON VASQUEZ

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

2016  Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Specialization in Literacy, Language, and Culture
Chair: Taffy E. Raphael
Committee members: William Teale, Nathan Phillips, Shelby Cosner, and Silvia Noguerón-Liu
Dissertation Title: Teachers’ Collaborative Inquiry about Teacher-Family Communication: A Design Experiment

2005  M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Specialization in Literacy, Language, and Culture

2001  B.A. in Elementary Education and History
Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois
Magna Cum Laude

RESEARCH & EVALUATION EXPERIENCE

2014-present  Visiting Research Specialist
Center for Literacy, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
• Project co-manager for mixed methods evaluation of statewide grant supporting professional development for preschool instructional leaders

2012-2014  Research Assistant
Center for Urban Education Leadership, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
• Assisted with data collection and analysis for external evaluation of federally funded professional development initiative in early childhood centers

2011-2013  Consultant
SchoolRise, LLC, Chicago, Illinois
Thinking Experiences in the Art Museum, Project Manager, 2011-2012
• Managed data collection and analysis of evaluation of professional development initiative of the Art Institute of Chicago with elementary classroom teachers
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2012  Instructor
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
- Curriculum & Instruction: Foundations of Literacy Teaching and Learning

2002-2006  Elementary Classroom Teacher
Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic School, Chicago, Illinois
- 5th grade teacher 2002-2005
- 3rd grade teacher 2005-2006

2001-2002  Elementary Classroom Teacher
Chicago Public School, Chicago, Illinois
- 5th grade teacher 2001-2002

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COACHING EXPERIENCE

2011-2013  Consultant
SchoolRise, LLC, Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Public Schools Early Adopters Project, 2011-2013
Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation, 2012-2013
- Facilitated teacher teams in development of exemplar unit plans and assessments based on the Common Core State Standards.
- Facilitated school teams through the Standards Based Change Process.
- Developed and facilitated three-day institute on higher order thinking

2006-2011  Literacy Coach & Professional Developer
Chicago Public School, Chicago, Illinois
School Initiatives Coach, 2010-2011
Supported Core Reading Material Adoption Coach, 2009-2010
Reading First Coach, 2006-2009
- Coached individual teachers to develop literacy instructional practice
- Guided teachers in analyzing and applying formal and informal assessment data.
- Facilitated weekly grade level team meetings
- Developed and delivered all-staff and small group professional development
**PUBLICATIONS**


**EVALUATION REPORTS**


Au, Kathryn H., Raphael, Taffy E., & **Vasquez, Jaime M.** (2012). Thinking experiences in the art museum: A partnership program for schools. TEAM evaluation year 2. Chicago, IL: SchoolRise, LLC.

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


Vasquez, Jaime M. (2011, December) Literacy coaching for the long haul: An insider’s critical review of the research. Roundtable presented at the 61st annual meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Jacksonville, FL.

STATE & LOCAL PRESENTATIONS


Vasquez, Jaime M. (2015, March). Strengthening communication with diverse families. Session presented at the Loyola University Language Matters Spring Conference, Chicago, IL.


SELECTED SERVICE

2012-present  
**Literacy Research Association**  
- Discussant and session chair  
- Reviewer for conference proposals and yearbook

2015-present  
**American Education Research Association**  
- Reviewer for conference proposals

2013-2014  
**UIC Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women**  
- Member student subcommittee

2012-2013  
**UIC College of Education Doctoral Student Forum**  
- Co-chair

1997-present  
**Metro Achievement Center for Girls**  
- Developed and delivered training sessions for tutors and parents, 2007-Present  
- Curriculum consultant 2002-2013  
- Advisor to individual students in summer and after school program, 1997-2000

HONORS

2001  
Education Award, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL

1999-2001  
Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL

GRANTS

*Internal*

2014  
Dissertation Research Grant,  
- College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago. Amount funded: $500

2013  
Conference Travel Funds  
- Curriculum & Instruction Department, University of Illinois at Chicago. Amount funded: $500

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association  
Illinois Reading Council  
International Reading Association  
Literacy Research Association  
National Council of Teachers of English Assembly on Research
CERTIFICATIONS

Illinois Elementary Certificate (Type 03)
  Reading teacher endorsement
  Middle school endorsements in language arts and social studies

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Conversant in Spanish