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TYPES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT:
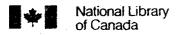# EFFECTS ON PARENT RATING OF SCHOOLS

by

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BGS, Simon Fraser University, 1989

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ii

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 Types of Parent Involvement: Effects on Parent Rating of Schools

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Abstract

This thesis stemmed from research linking parent involvement with improved student achievement. Despite the repeated findings supporting parent involvement, schools still tend to keep parents "at arms length" with little participation in instructional issues. Researchers remain perplexed about the failure of teachers and schools to involve parents more. In an attempt to understand what parents value in schools an examination of the types of parent involvement associated with parent ratings of schools was undertaken.

Two types of parent involvement emerged from a literature search. The kinds of involvement where parents go to schools to volunteer, attend school events or participate in advisory council meetings was seen as being of a type that only affects the child indirectly. These kinds of involvement were identified as Type 1. Type 2 involvement affects the parents' own child(ren) directly. It is associated with parent involvement in instruction. Usually this occurs in the home where parents help with homework or school projects.

Data for the thesis were collected from twelve research sites in two British Columbia school districts. As part of a larger parent involvement project conducted by some members of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, this thesis used quantitative and qualitative methods. The survey data were used to identify high and low rating parents and to guide the initial investigation of the interviews. The basic relationship between parent ratings of school and types of parent

involvement was determined by counting the involvement incidents once they had been classified as Type 1 or Type 2.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were not always consistent but in some ways were congruent. The findings reveal a new dimension to the complexity of involving parents in instructional matters with their children. Low and high rating parents engaged in parent involvement activities with equal frequency. High rating parents engaged in Type 1 parent involvement activities more than low rating parents did. Low rating parent involvement was mostly Type 2. Low rating parents did not feel as welcome in schools as did their high rating counterparts. The relations between low rating parents and teachers were strained. Low rating parents were more appreciative of school newsletters than high rating parents.

Further research may reveal that high rating parents need direct personal contact with the school. The implication is that there is some factor or group of factors inherent to Type 1 involvement that leads parents to higher regard for schools. The critical factors embodied in Type 1 parent involvement may be the rich personal communication it allows and the opportunities for parent involvement training that are inherent in some Type 1 activities.

Dedication

To my children:

Leonard, Andrew, Johan and Dorothy

May education help you in the pursuit of health and happiness

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my husband
Glenn Foster
for encouragement and support

<u>Collaborative Research Team</u>

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1:The Problem

Research Foundations

Research consistently documents a positive relationship between parent involvement and school climate. Brookover and Lezotte, 1979, and Brookover and Schneider, 1975, noted that high-achieving schools are characterized by high evaluations, expectations and parent interest. Haynes et al (1989) make a strong case for the involvement of parents for the enhancement of school climate. They clearly relate improvements in school climate to parent involvement.

> The climate of schools is considerably enhanced when parents are included in the planning and organizing of school activities and contribute to important decisions about significant events in the school. (Haynes, Comer and Hamilton-Lee 1989, p. 89-90)

Statement of the Problem, Some Definitions

With research evidence supporting a link between parent involvement and school climate, this thesis investigates the issue of which **type** of parent involvement is most influential. Does parent involvement of all types affect parent perceptions of school climate or is one type more than another associated with this phenomenon?

Parent Involvement, for the purpose of this thesis is broken in two types as delineated by Becker and Epstein (1982), Henderson (1986) and Coleman and Collinge(1991). The distinction between the types

relates to whether or not parent involvement is directed toward helping one's own child directly or toward strengthening the overall school program. Those parent activities that are aimed primarily at strengthening the overall school program and only indirectly toward helping the parent's own child are of **Type One** parent involvement. Examples of Type One activities are: advisory, volunteering, fund raising, attending school events and advocacy activities. **Type Two** parent involvement are those parent activities that involve assisting one's own child directly, usually at home but possibly in the classroom as well. Examples of Type Two parent involvement are: helping with homework or other learning activities at home, meeting or consulting with teachers. Several researchers have established that Type Two parent involvement is the only type that is directly linked to improved student success in school. (Fullan, 1982; Epstein, 1983; Truby, 1987, Henderson, 1988 and McLaughlin, 1987). Type One parent involvement is not associated with student achievement but serves the school and community in other ways. This thesis considers the types of involvement and their relationship to parent ratings of school and parent perception of school climate.

Parent, student and teacher **perceptions** of each other include all of the ways that the actors come to understand each other's conditions, strengths, limitations etc. Players in societal roles do not usually have a complete understanding of the role unless they are active players in that role. Parent **perceptions of school climate** are used along with **parent ratings of school** as measurable elements to identify high and

2

low rating parents for the purpose of understanding differences among parental perceptions. A **high rating parent** is one who either gives the school a rating of 8 or 9 on a scale of 0 - 9 *or* has a mean scale score for parent perception of school climate of less than 2. The highest possible scale score for parent perception of school climate is 1. A **low rating parent** gives the school a rating of 5 or less on a scale of 0 - 9 *or* has a mean scale score for parent perception of school climate of 2.5 or greater. The lowest possible scale score for parent perception of school climate is 5. **School climate** is defined as "the composite of norms, expectations, and beliefs which characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system" (Coleman and LaRocque 1983b) Parents are one set of participants in the social system of the school along with students, teachers and principal. Only the parental point of view is considered in this thesis.

A **research site**, for the purposes of this thesis consists of a single classroom directed by a single teacher. Students are related to the site through enrollment in the classroom. Parents are related to the site through their child's enrollment in the classroom. Data for this thesis came from 12 research sites in two British Columbian school districts.

Discussion of the Thesis

There is ample evidence from the past twenty years of research to establish that parent involvement positively affects school climate: 1973: McDill and Rigsby, Klitgaard and Hall; 1975: Brookover and Schneider;

3

1977: Lucas and Lusthaus; 1979: Bronfenbrenner, Brookover and Lesotte; 1980: Wynne; 1982: Anderson; 1983: Purkey and Smith, Coleman and LaRocque; 1985: Fullan; 1987: Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie; 1988: Henderson; 1989: Haynes, Comer and Hamilton-Lee;

Almost as impressive is the number of researchers who have sought to characterize types of parent involvement in order to establish which types of involvement result in increases in student achievement: Gordon (1977), Cervone and O'Leary (1982), Henderson et al. (1986), Epstein (1987), Williams and Chavkin (1989), Hester (1989). For the sake of simplicity and clarity, this research utilizes the typology presented by Epstein (1982) and Coleman and Collinge(1991).

While two types of involvement may seem to be an over simplification of human behaviour, the Type Two parent involvement is fairly distinct in its parameters. Researchers have been able to isolate this type sufficiently in order to analyze its effect on student achievement. Making a two part distinction in parent involvement identifies parent involvement in instruction as one type and categorizes all others as a different type.

Sampling for this thesis comes from twelve research sites in British Columbia. Seven of the sites were located in five schools in an interior school district. The other five sites were from three schools in the lower mainland. Students and parents were surveyed at all sites. Selected information from the surveys was used to calculate school climate scores

and parent rating of school for each parent. A random selection of parents was interviewed at both sites. The interview data were examined to establish the number and type of parent involvement activities. The information from the interviews was coordinated with the statistical survey data to obtain a portrait of how different types of parent involvement relate to parent ratings of school and parent perceptions of school climate.

Research of this nature has not been done in British Columbia. Documents from the B.C. Provincial Government, 1989 School Act, Year 2000 and related programs, give rights and responsibilities to parents. A Statement of Education Policy Order of the Minister of Education in December 1989 states: "They (parents) have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share in the tasks of educating their young."

With new rights and responsibilities for parents, teachers and principals are left groping to understand which types of parent involvement will be most likely to influence the overall performance of the school positively. Which type will empower students, parents and teachers to greater efficacy? Within the educational bureaucracy of British Columbia, this research may help clarify the value of parent involvement projects. It may give a clearer indication of the types of parent involvement that enhance school climate and affect parent ratings of school.

Chapter 2:
A Literature Review of Parent Involvement

<u>Types of Parent Involvement.</u>

Many researchers have attempted to classify the types of parent involvement. Gordon (1977) identified six types of parent involvement, (1) involving the parent as teacher of own child, (2) classroom volunteer, (3) paid paraprofessional, (4) learner, (5) decision maker, and (6) audience. Cervone and O'Leary (1982) proposed five types of parent involvement: (1) reporting progress, (2) special events, (3) parent education, (4) parents teaching, and (5) educational decision makers. These five types may be ranked on both horizontal and vertical continua from passive to active. Epstein (1987), distinguishes between four different types of parent involvement in schools: (1) basic obligations of parents (2) school-to-home communication (3) parent involvement at the school (4) parent involvement in learning activities at home. Williams and Chavkin (1989) refer to six parent roles: (1) audience (2) home tutor, (3) program supporter, (4) co-learner, (5) advocate, and (6) decision maker. Hester (1989) suggests five types: (1) communication with parents, (2) parents as teachers, (3) parents as supporters or activities, (4) parents as learners, and (5) parents as advocates.

Henderson et al. (1986) summarized the literature on types of parent involvement when they wrote:

> A two-part distinction emerges between (a) those parent activities aimed primarily at strengthening the overall school program and only indirectly toward helping the parent's own child (e.g.. advisory, volunteering, fund-raising, and advocacy activities); and (b) those parent activities that involve assisting one's own child (e.g., helping with homework, meeting with teachers, and attending school events. (p.110)

The two part distinction between types of parent involvement is very clear in the work of Becker and Epstein, 1982:

> ...to involve parents in learning activities with their children at home. This type of parent involvement is distinctly different from the parent involvement that brings parents into the classroom to assist the teacher or the parent involvement that includes parents as participants in decision on school governance. Parent involvement in learning activities is a strategy for increasing the educational effectiveness of the time that parents and children spend with one another at home. (p.87)

Coleman and Collinge, 1991 identify parent involvement in instruction as a distinct type:

> Here it refers to the act of engaging parents in instructional matters, predominantly in the home but also in the

classroom. The reason for focussing on parent involvement as described here is because it has been shown repeatedly to have a positive effect on student performance (p.7)

For the purposes of this thesis the types of parent involvement are kept as distinct as possible. Only those types of involvement where the parent deals directly with the child or with the school in relation to the child will be considered one type. Examples of these activities include parent help with homework or other learning activity at home and parent-teacher meetings or communications about the child. All other involvement is considered a different type.

Parent Involvement: What's In It for Students?

Research consistently documents the positive relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Clausen, 1966; McDill and Rigsby, 1973; Leichter, 1974; Lightfoot, 1978; Epstein and McPartland, 1979; Marjoribanks, 1979; Fantini, 1980; Fullan, 1982; Epstein, 1983; Truby, 1987, Henderson, 1988). Epstein reviews the research to 1987 and concludes:

> The evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievements, attitudes, and aspirations, even after student ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account. Students gain in personal and academic development if their families

emphasize school, let the children know they do, and do so continually over the school years. (Epstein, 1987, p. 120)

Fullan (1982) makes a statement that summarizes the general trend of research literature dealing with parent involvement in student learning.

> ...the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement (Fullan, 1982, p.193)

Henderson (1988) emphasizes that parents, more than teachers affect student achievement when they are involved. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) see teachers and parents having equal influence on student learning.

> Help is most effective when it comes from parents. The key to achievement seems to lie in students' positive attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment. And these attitudes are largely formed at home. (Henderson, 1988, p. 150)

> The research on parent involvement suggests clearly that the home has at least as much influence on student learning and behaviour as do the teacher and the school. It might be proposed, therefore, that the most effective educational program would be one in which the home and school work

together on behalf of the child. (Greenwood and Hickman, 1991 p.287)

Epstein (1987) found that the amount of parent involvement tends to drop off significantly after grade one. There is evidence that parent involvement with older students is as effective as it is with young children but it is not so common.

In an attempt to understand apathy among students in American high schools, Bishop (1989) concludes that schools do not offer sufficient incentive for academic achievement. "The key to motivation is recognizing and rewarding learning effort and achievement." (Bishop, 1989, p.42) One of the inherent elements of parental involvement with children's education is the frequent rewards and sanctions available to parents. "Parents control more reinforcers than teachers." (Barth, 1979, p. 451). This being so, one of the possible solutions to high school student apathy may lie in increased parental involvement.

Finn's (1989) research supports parent involvement in student learning although he does not address this intervention specifically. In assessing the solutions to prevent student withdrawal from school he states: "Intervention efforts at all ages should be directed toward increasing and maintaining students' participation levels." (Finn, 1989, p.132)

Fehrman et al (1987) found that effective parent involvement increases and maintains student participation in secondary schools by increasing the amount of time spent on homework, reducing the home

T.V. viewing time and contributing to high grades. Phillips and Rosenberger (1983) claim that:

> ...academic achievement of students can be increased as much as 35 percent with parent involvement. ...Regular contact with the school also increased the chances that parents would espouse values and interests compatible with the school, such as encouraging student efforts at school achievement or school attendance. (Phillips and Rosenberger, 1983,p. 33)

Parent Involvement: What's In it for the Parents?

Parents want more involvement with their children's' education. Many parents:

> ...prefer not to defer traditional educational decisions to teachers and wish to extend their role beyond passive activities to partnership roles both in what their children are learning and how they are learning. (Andrews, 1987, p.153)

Increased achievement at school is not an isolated advantage to students. Lyons, Robbins and Smith (1983) suggest that when children work with parents on school related assignments, positive attitudes toward school and achievement result. Henderson (1988) concurs:

> When parents show an interest in their children's education and maintain high expectations for their performance, they

are promoting attitudes that are critical to achievement. (Henderson, 1988, p. 150)

Parents too benefit from involvement with their child's school-related activities. In helping parents understand the processes, programs and school-initiated changes that affect the child, Fullan (1982) notes:

> ...direct involvement in instruction in relation to their own child's education is one of the surest routes for parents to develop a sense of specific meaning vis-a-vis new programs designed to improve learning (Fullan, 1982, p. 200)

One path to improving child performance at school illustrates one of the benefits of parent involvement to parents. When parents give the child more attention and teach new skills, the parent perceives her/his own competence and communicates confidence to the child. The child feels more confident to perform and thus does better in school. The spiralling effect of parent involvement reinforcing parent competence, influencing student achievement and encouraging further parent involvement increases parental self esteem. Parent efficacy is enhanced through parent involvement.

> When parents learn to teach their own children, they not only give their children new skills but also build their own feelings of competence. This in turn motivates the children to perform better, setting a cycle of success-reinforcement in motion. (Henderson, 1987)

Conrad and Eash (1983) make it abundantly clear that parent involvement aids the whole family.

> ...when parents participate, they tend to enrich their home environments in ways that are supportive of enhanced school achievement. It also appears that increased parental attendance at school is a mediating factor in increasing parental ambitions for their children's academic achievement. (Conrad and Eash, 1983, p.233)

Parent Involvement: What's In It for the Teacher?

a. Understanding teacher efficacy:

McLaughlin and Yee (1988) address the concept of what is important to teachers in terms of their career. One of their observations was that teachers conceive of career and define career satisfaction in terms of:

> ...making a difference, sharing a discipline they love....teachers generate an expertise-based, individually determined notion of career: advancement is framed in terms of an ongoing process of professional growth, and success means effectiveness in the teaching role. (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988,p. 26)

> Career satisfaction for teachers hinges on the ability to pursue the personal values and beliefs that led them into teaching - to be of service and to make valued contributions to young students. (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988, p. 39)

13

"Making a difference" and making "valued contributions to young students" is often measured by teachers and society in terms of student achievement and social adjustment. Teaching careers and teacher efficacy are inextricably linked. Without feeling that one can make a difference or can make valued contributions to young people, the career of teaching is hollow and meaningless for most teachers. McLaughlin and Yee refer to opportunity and capacity as the constructs of teacher efficacy.

> Teachers with a sense of capacity tend to pursue effectiveness in the classroom, express commitment to the organization and career, and report a high level of professional satisfaction. (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988, p. 29)

For the purpose of assessing the effects of parent involvement on teacher efficacy, Hoover-Dempsey et al (1987) define teacher efficacy as:

> ...teachers' beliefs that they are effective in teaching, that the children they teach can learn, and that there is a body of professional knowledge available to them when they need assistance (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1987, p. 421)

b. Teacher efficacy and parent involvement:

Gibson and Dembo (1984) document the power of teacher efficacy: "....teacher efficacy may influence certain patterns of behaviour known to yield achievement gains." (Gibson, S and Dembo M.H. 1984, p. 580). Bandura (1977) and Ashton et al(1983), in studies of teacher efficacy have suggested that teachers' sense of efficacy is positively related to educational outcomes. Since educational outcomes are conclusively related to parent involvement, then teacher efficacy must be affected by parent involvement. The evidence in the research-based literature is conclusive.

> ...parent involvement provides support for the importance of role clarity and complementarity in developing productive home-school relationships. Teacher efficacy, by definition, implies a clear, proactive, and strong conceptualization of the teaching role. (Hoover-Dempsey et al 1987)

> ...parent-teacher interactions influence teacher efficacy...A major source of teachers' low efficacy is their relations with parents of low-achieving students. (Ashton et al 1983)

> Teachers and parents rated each other more positively when the teacher used frequent parent involvement practices. Parents rated these teachers higher in overall teaching ability and interpersonal skills. (Epstein 1987 p.127-128)

> Teachers earn higher ratings from parents when they use parent involvement activities with more parents, send more

communications home, and maintain good classroom discipline (Epstein, 1985, p.8)

Parent involvement affects student outcomes directly through achievement outcomes and indirectly through improved attitudes, behaviour and attendance. Teacher efficacy is affected directly by student achievement outcomes and indirectly by parental attitudes towards teacher effectiveness. As Dembo and Gibson (1985) express:

> ...a teacher's sense of efficacy may affect student achievement, and student achievement may in turn influence a teacher's sense of efficacy (Dembo and Gibson, 1985,p.177)

Parent Involvement: What's In It for the Principal and the School?

a. Principals and school climate:

"Principals' activities are school climate" was the "thumbnail" conclusion of Phil Redmond(1984) in his attempts to establish parental perceptions of elementary school climates. He concluded that about fifty percent of school climate, from the parents' perspective, was directly related to the activities of the principal. Research on school climates provides a myriad of definitions. For the purposes of this thesis a working definition that will reflect the perceptions of the clients as vital to school climate will be most useful. Coleman and LaRocque(1983b) provide a workable conceptualization to that end. They use Brookover et al's

(1979) definition of school climate as: "...the composite of norms, expectations, and beliefs which characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system." (Coleman and LaRocque 1983b)

The critical principle guiding Coleman and LaRocque's use of parent surveys as a means of measuring school climate was that "schools should be responsive to their clients' preferences." (Coleman and LaRocque 1983). They see climate as primarily relating to the perceptions of clients. They felt that initiative to improve school climate should include a focus on: "...participative planning and problem-solving (with parents) rather than on passive information-sharing." (Coleman and LaRocque, 1983)

The observations of Lucas and Lusthaus (1977) support Coleman's perceptions about passive information. They also see the typical communications from school to home as paternalistic in nature.

> ...one-way information-giving tends to assume that meaning resides in the message, rather than in the intended receiver's perception and interpretation of the message. (Lucas and Lusthaus (1977, p.1)

The openness of the school, as a factor of school climate depends upon: "the degree to which their communication boundaries are permeable to parental input." (Lucas and Lusthaus, p.1)

Anderson (1982) reviews the literature on school climate and tabulates a summary of data from major climate studies. She reports that most assessments of school climate include student achievement as an important element. Two studies reviewed by Anderson(1982), Brookover and Lezotte, 1979, and Brookover and Schneider, 1975, noted that high-achieving schools are characterized by high evaluations, expectations and parent interest.

b. School climate and parent involvement:

Klitgaard and Hall, 1973a, reported in Anderson, (1982) found that overachieving schools have more parent involvement. McDill and Rigsby (1973) found that one of the the social structure variables for school climate was the amount of parent involvement. Parent involvement is an ingredient for assessing the climate of schools in the research reported in Phi Delta Kappan 1980 and by Wynne (1980). Wynne states: "Achievement is associated with parent involvement, teacher attitudes and the instructional program." (Wynne 1980)

There is a positive effect on families and schools when parents are involved as co-producers of their children's educational experience.

> Not only do individual children and their families function more effectively, but there is an aggregate effect on the performance of students and teachers when schools collaborate with parents. (Henderson, 1988 p.150)

From the review of literature affecting students, their families and parents, it is obvious that school climate can be improved through an increase in parent involvement that will have impact on students, teacher attitudes and the instructional program, as Wynne claims in the above citing. Purkey and Smith (1983) and Fullan (1985) include parent involvement in their lists of critical organizational variables for effective schools.

Haynes et al (1989) make a strong case for the involvement of parents for the enhancement of school climate.

> One of the most effective ways to enhance the climate of schools is to involve parents at all levels of school life. Parents serve to enhance home-school relationships, student behaviour, and academic achievement. (Haynes et al, 1989, p. 87)

In addition, Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie (1987) reported that teacher efficacy was significantly related to different forms of parental involvement in schools as noted earlier. Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Hobbs et al (1984) reported that children's performance in schools could be improved if the relationship between teachers and parents were strengthened. Principals, who coordinate and lead to empower teachers for the enhancement of student achievement, have much to gain from encouraging and supporting parent involvement in the schools for the benefit of all.

Haynes et al (1989) clearly related improvements in school climate to parent involvement. They conclude:

> The climate of schools is considerably enhanced when parents are included in the planning and organizing of school activities and contribute to important decisions about significant events in the school. (Haynes, Comer and Hamilton-Lee 1989, p. 89-90)

> Parent involvement is neither a quick fix nor a luxury; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education. (Henderson, 1988, p. 153)

Parent Involvement: Why Don't Teachers Involve Parents? What are the Barriers?

Fullan (1982) outlines some of the barriers to parent involvement. He sees these barriers as being of two types, (a) phenomenological barriers and (b) logistical barriers.

> Phenomenological barriers relate to the lack of knowledge and understanding that administrators and parents have of each others' subjective worlds. Logistical or technical problems concern lack of time, opportunity, and know-how about what activities or forms of parent involvement would be most effective. Phenomenological obstacles are the greatest because they are more fundamental and because they often go unrecognized. Stereotyping is easier and more efficient than empathizing. (Fullan, 1982, p. 203)

a. Phenomenological barriers:

Lightfoot captures the essence of the phenomenological problems of home and school interactions with two words in the title of her book, Worlds Apart (1978). She acknowledges that parents and teachers often perceive each other as being uncaring about children and devaluing the education process which can lead to distance, distrust and blaming. Moles (1982) reiterates this difficulty that parents often hesitate to become involved in the school because of feelings of mistrust and anxiety when dealing with school staff.

> Teachers reported... fears for their own safety at evening events. (They) perceive that parents do not transmit educational values. Teachers feel overwhelmed by the problems of their students and families. (They) have low expectations regarding parents' follow-up efforts. (Moles, 1982, p.46)

The repeated factors that mitigate against productive parent involvement are mentioned by Becker and Epstein (1982a), Hobbs et al. (1984,) and Lortie (1975) in addition to those cited by Moles (1982) and Lightfoot (1978). The researchers suggest that teachers may fear parents because of perceptions that parents question teachers' professional competence or blame them for children's problems.

Parents are often at an disadvantage when they attempt to communicate with schools. As Weatherley (1979) discovered during

21

research concerning student assessment meetings to which parents were invited:

> The parents are at a great disadvantage in these meetings. they are outnumbered...in a strange room...confronting a number of people for the first time (Weatherley, 1979, p. 51).

Moles (1982) reported that the barriers as perceived by parents include:

> ...family health problems, work schedules, having small children, receiving only "bad news" from school, fear for their safety, late notice of meetings, and not understanding their children's homework (Moles, 1982,p.46)

b. Logistical barriers:

More of the technological barriers to home-school collaboration are outlined by Moles(1982).

> ...parents face competing demands of work and family life, come from different cultural backgrounds.... For their part many teachers also face competing demands at school and at home, lack of training for dealing with parents, and may have difficulty relating to culturally different families. (Moles, 1982, p.45)

> ...skills of teachers and parents for working together are not well developed, ...some mistrust of each other, especially in

low-income areas, is present, and that parents often feel that they lack certain skills needed to help educate children, especially as the children grow older. (Moles, 1987, p. 144)

A further technical difficulty that Lightfoot (1978) outlines is one that recognized the inherent conflict between the parental concern for one child versus the organizational responsibility for group progress. Davies (1987) develops this conflict but focuses on the barriers that the organizational structure of the school imposes on the collaborative production of education. He sees the need for a shift in attitude from education for children as a "delivery of services" to a "partnership" model as a major one and one that requires training for all stakeholders. He sees change within an organization as tending toward the principle of "satisficing" and states that schools exhibit some rather special characteristics that inhibit change. These he outlines:

> * The goals of schools as organizations are diffuse, multifaceted, and subject to widely varied interpretations....
> * The "technology" of achieving goals is fragmented with responsibilities divided among administrators, counselors, classroom teachers, teaching specialists, families, and students themselves, and the connections between a particular activity and a particular desired goal are often uncertain.
> * The informal norms of school organizations are particularly powerful....
> * The formal structure of schools is unique. (Davies 1987)

Davies concludes that "the introduction of almost any form of citizen participation will be difficult" (Davies, 1987, p.159) but the potential for improving student achievement, teacher efficacy and school climate make the effort worthwhile. He advocates in 1987 and 1991:

> ...comprehensive parent involvement programs, involving parents at every step in the process of planning and implementing the plans. Such comprehensive programs should incorporate and integrate elements of all of the forms of involvement - coproduction, decision making, advocacy, and choice. To increase participation, a wide variety of styles and forms of participations should be provided, recognizing different interests, values, time availability and cultural traditions of parents. (Davies, 1987, p. 162)

> (These efforts will)...make an important contribution to making school affairs more reflective of democratic values and to making public schools more effective for all children. (Davies, 1987, p.162)

> The potential of a parent involvement program will be enhanced if it is treated as an integrated strategy. (Davies, 1991, p.380)

c. Conclusions about barriers:

The research supporting parent involvement is beginning to reflect an understanding of why schools hold parents at "arm length" for the most part. Some of the studies reflect that teacher efficacy may play an important role in why teachers hesitate to involve parents in instruction.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) suggest that low levels of efficacy may be causal in reducing levels of parent-teacher contact. Dembo and Gibson (1985) assert that lower levels of parent-teacher contact may be due to frustration and a lower sense of efficacy resulting from teachers' reactions to characteristics of low-achieving students' parents.

Few of the researchers speak to the need for teacher training for the involvement of parents in instructional programs. McAfee (1987) recognized the possible need:

> Another equally plausible explanation is that teachers and administrators do not have education and training in how to work effectively with parents and community (McAfee, 1987, p. 185)

What Parent Involvement Research Implies:

Research findings proclaim that parent involvement is one of the most promising innovations that teachers can undertake. It is almost certain to improve student achievement and attitudes. It is likely to help families, make teachers more efficacious and improve the climate of schools. The barriers to parent involvement, by all empirical measures, are worth the effort to overcome them. Parent involvement is best treated like any major change innovation in schools. Adoption, implementation and continuation procedures must be carefully considered, presented and supervised.

The effects of specific types of parent involvement within the school system is beginning to be understood. The research finding on parent involvement in instruction, as one type, is fairly clear. This thesis looks at both types of parent involvement, for example, parent involvement in instruction and other forms of parent involvement in an attempt to understand more clearly the effects that different types of parent involvement may have on parent rating of school and parent perceptions of school climate.

Chapter 3: Method

Philosophical Stance

Merriam (1989) suggests that the first section of a report on method should contain "information about the investigator including philosophical orientation and biases toward the problem or setting" (p.194). To this end, the following information is submitted.

The investigator is a parent of four and an educator in the public school system. That parents should be involved in instruction for the sake of the child is a philosophical bias reinforced by research, parenting and teaching experiences. That parent involvement in instruction will lead to higher parent ratings of school seems a likely outcome given that such involvement increases student achievement and one of the basis for parents ratings of school is student achievement. Despite the wealth of research affirming the positive effect of parent involvement on student achievement, schools still involve parents in relatively limited and insignificant ways. It would be helpful for the effective schools movement to understand which types of parent involvement most influence parent ratings of school and parent perceptions of school climate. It is important for researchers to identify the school and home practices that facilitate parent involvement in instruction.

Research Methods Rationale

This research links qualitative with quantitative data. The general method for this thesis involved a preliminary study of questionnaire data followed by a multi-site case approach (Huberman and Miles, 1984).

Much discussion and debate centers around combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. The investigator agrees with Fielding and Fielding (1986) that "using multiple approaches increases the possibility that the link between social reality and social theory is better forged." (p.7) As Denzin (1970) insisted, "by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources, sociologists can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies."

This research makes strenuous attempts to deal with questions of validity, reliability and ethics in both the quantitative and qualitative work. Although we know that "volunteer subjects are likely to be a biased sample of the target population" (Borg and Gall, 1990, p.227) we are restricted by ethical constraints to obtain informed consent from parents before involving them in the research project. The investigator acknowledges the possibility of this bias and refers the reader to the work of Rosenthal & Rosnow (1975), reported in Borg & Gall (1990) for a review of volunteer subjects. They identify a number of characteristics found to occur in studies using volunteers. Most research in education involves the use of volunteer subjects. "It is therefore pointless to reject all

research that employs volunteers, since in most instances the choice is either to use volunteers or not to do the research." (Borg and Gall, 1990, p.180)

Parent surveys allowed for the usual statistical controls for validity and reliability. In the interview data, naturally occurring triangulation (see Merriam, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Guba and Lincoln, 1981) was an integral part of all data collection and interview coding. Multiple investigators used multiple sources of data and multiple methods to confirm the emerging data. The author was a member of this research team. The cross-checked coded parent interviews were examined in depth for this thesis. The parent involvement items were further specifically coded according to the type of parent involvement indicated.

> The best way to avoid overlooking important variables in your own research is to have your design studied and criticized by several other researchers before starting to collect data. (Borg & Gall, 1990, p.183)

The object of this method was not only to describe parent rating of school as seen through the quantitative analysis but to understand it through interview analysis. What type of parent involvement correlates to high parent rating of schools? Can we learn more about the ways in which parent involvement affects parental perceptions of school climate?

The information sought here could have been acquired through strictly qualitative or quantitative methods. Neither method alone would

be as likely to describe reality as both methods used in a complementary fashion. As Denzin, 1970 quoted in Merriam,1986, stated: "..the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies." (p.69)

The quantitative data provided a set of preliminary findings which gave a sense of direction to the study. They were used to establish two distinct groups of parents; those who rated the schools highly and those who gave the schools low ratings. They further established theoretical links between parent perceptions and parent ratings of schools. In order to explore the effects of different types of involvement on parent perceptions and to understand the ways in which those perceptions were linked to the parent ratings of schools, interview data were analyzed and recursively linked with the quantitative findings.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis: The sample

A total of 230 parents were surveyed. This sample represented a broad range of socio-economic groupings but did not include parents at either extremity of the continuum; neither in the depths of poverty on the one hand nor independently wealthy on the other. The parents in this thesis were meant to represent, as closely as possible, "average" parents within the province of B.C.

Information about the school districts and the research sites is pertinent to this thesis. It has been synthesized and summarized by Dan Domes, a member of the research team. It is submitted here from a previous publication of Coleman, Collinge & Seifert, 1992.

Site Alpha is a relatively large interior school district, both in terms of the student population it serves and its geographic range. It serves a community with a resource-based economy, in this case forestry. Although the administrative office and most of the schools are clustered in and around the district's one administrative centre, there are three communities at a considerable distance from the district's administrative centre, each with its own elementary and high schools. In addition, there are a number of very small outlier schools scattered throughout the district. The socio-economic level of the neighbourhoods ranges from low to high. A considerable number of students are bussed to the schools and there is a good mix of students from urban and rural backgrounds. Five elementary schools in this catchment area participated in this thesis.

School A provided two classrooms to the study. It serves families from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. It is unique in our sample in that it offers a French Immersion track (a program in which French is the language of instruction). Students in the English track are able to walk from their homes, but a substantial number of students in the French program are from outside the school's normal attendance area and are driven to and from school by their parents.

School G is a smaller school and contributed one classroom to the study. It draws students from an

attendance area characterized by sharp socio-economic differences between the neighbourhoods. Though many of the children come from families in the lower socio-economic bracket, the school does draw students from some newly developed middle class neighbourhoods and from one residential development considered to be quite exclusive. The student population has a reputation of being reasonably challenging, and teacher turnover is high.

School H, which provided two classes, serves a solidly middle class residential community containing perhaps the most exclusive neighbourhood in the city. The 350 students served by the school are able to walk from their homes, though few go home for lunch. Among the 29 teachers, turnover is low, and the school has a reputation in the district for having fewer discipline problems than other elementary schools. The school has has a reputation for having a parent community that takes an active interest in the education of its children, with many parents who do not hesitate to make their views known.

School N contributed one classroom to the study. It is located in a rural community approximately thirty kilometres outside the district's main population centre. The families that make up this community farm and raise livestock either on a full- or part-time basis, work in the local forest industry, or commute to the city for employment. Most of the approximately 200 children who attend this school are bussed in, some from considerable distance. School N has a reputation in the district for having strong support from a fairly tightly knit community. The principal and most of the ten teachers commute from the city.

School S, which supplied one classroom to the research project sits just on the edge of the district's main population centre. Immediately to the north and west, the

land opens up into farms, while in the other directions, land is divided into relatively large residential lots. A significant number of children can walk to school, but the majority are bussed. The student population represents a broad cross-section of socio-economic home backgrounds. Over the past few years, several large projects, like the building of an adventure playground, have helped bring the school community together. The school has a generally good reputation among parents, and the community is perceived as being very supportive of the school.

Site Beta is a medium-sized suburban school district of the lower mainland of British Columbia located just outside a large metropolitan area. Most residents commute to jobs in the city, but a number are employed in the town itself, mainly in service industries. While there is some agricultural area around the populations centre, those who live in these areas are generally employed locally or in the city but have chosen a rural lifestyle, often with hobby farms. Most of the schools in the district are located within the main population centre, with a few scattered in the rural areas. The community has grown rapidly over the past years with an influx of new residents.

School A contributed three classrooms to the study. It opened three years ago in a newly constructed subdivision approximately two kilometres from the town centre. There are a number of portable classrooms on site and already construction of a new wing is planned to begin in the coming year. The school serves a solidly middle class community, some of whom travel to the city to work and some of whom are employed locally. Most of the students who attend this school walk from their nearby homes, but some are bussed in from the rural area to the north. The school has a reputation in the district for being

fairly progressive. The parent population is regarded as supportive.

School B supplied two classrooms. The school, which is located approximately one kilometre from the town centre, is in a residential area. The district's largest high school is directly across the street. The neighbourhoods surrounding School B are older than those around School A. School B, itself, was built approximately 30 years ago. It serves families from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. All 350 students live within walking distance of the school and come from nearby homes or from a cluster of apartment buildings near the town centre. The student population is regarded as somewhat challenging and includes a number if integrated special needs students for which the school is quite well-known in the district." (pp 8-10)

The Procedure

a. Literature review

The first step in the procedure of this thesis was a comprehensive literature review (Chapter 2) in order to contribute to an understanding of the effects of and types of parent involvement.

One of the most important and difficult tasks that you must complete before starting your research is to pull together the research findings that are relevant to your topic, extract useful knowledge, and draw some general conclusions. (Borg and Gall, 1990, p170)

The literature review began with a search of ways that investigators have identified types of parent involvement allowing for a fairly separate two part distinction. It continued with an analysis of the effects of parent involvement on students, parents, teachers and schools. This provided a background for understanding the significance of parent interactions with students, teachers and schools. The literature review concluded with an investigation of the problems surrounding parent involvement activities. This part of the review provided a better understanding of efforts made by parents and teachers to overcome difficulties.

b. Types of research

The decision to use both quantitative and interview data was purposefully made so that the investigator could use them together to satisfy the demands or the research in a way that would expand the knowledge and experience of the investigator as well as assure the reader of the value of both processes used in a complementary way. Without the training and experience needed to carry out qualitative work alone (See Borg and Gall, 1990, p.379), the chosen path will allow the investigator to conduct stringent quantitative analysis as a conceptual framework and with the combined training and experience of project team members to assure competent analyses of the interview data as well. "...in many cases a combination of the two approaches is superior to either.

The two observational methods generally produce very similar findings."
(Reichardt and Cook, 1979)

c. Survey instruments:

The quantitative data collection began with the development of Likert-type survey instruments (Borg and Gall 1990, p.311) for parents. As part of a larger research project instruments were developed for students and teachers at the same time.

> Initially items were generated by the eleven members of the original research team who collectively represented teachers, parents and/or school administrators. In brainstorming sessions the group created items that were intended to measure attitudes and behaviours thought critical to the development of collaborative relationships amongst all three groups. These items drew on interpretation of the parent involvement literature and the personal and professional experiences of members of the research team. (Coleman and Collinge, 1991, p.11)

Parental respondents were asked to choose between Agree Strongly, Agree, Not sure, Disagree, Disagree Strongly for the series of questions. These survey instruments were administered in the fall of 1990.

Nine scales were formed from the 61 items on the parent questionnaire. The nine scales (See Appendix 1) were delineated by members of the research team to reflect variables thought to be critical to home - school collaboration. The relevant scales for this thesis were: (1)

Parent Scale 5, Perception of teacher concern about parent involvement,
(2) Parent Scale F: Perception of parent/school communication and (3)
Parent Scale 8: Perception of school climate. Parent Scale F was
actually a combination of original scales. Factor analysis, described
later, was used to unite scales 1,3,4 and 6 into Scale F. All of these
scales dealt with communications between home and school and were so
interconnected it is likely they constituted a single variable. In addition
parents were asked to rate the school on a 10-point scale. (See
Appendix 1 for a complete listing of parent survey questions in their
corresponding scales)

d. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha:

With the assistance of Tim Seifert, a PhD candidate in the Faculty
of Education at SFU,a variety of analyses were conducted using SPSS
on a mainframe computer and EQS, a structural equations program, on
the Macintosh. Because the survey instrument solicits a graded
response rather than a dichotomous one, Cronbach's Alpha is the
appropriate method for computing reliability (Borg and Gall, 1990, p.211)

Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated the internal consistency of the
scales. The scales that emerged were all judged adequate by accepted
standards for further analysis. (See Appendix 1) For the purposes of
reliability, some of the items in the parent survey were slightly adjusted in
order to improve the scales on a Time 2 survey. The Time 2
questionnaire was administered several months later in the spring of

1991. Some of the scales were marginally improved at Time 2 but all of the scales used in this thesis were unaffected by the time two survey. The second administration of the questionnaire reflects the efforts of the research team to eliminate possible sources of error.

> Only when a combination of equivalence and stability is employed, that is, when different forms of the test are administered with a time interval between, are all three sources of error taken into account. Thus, this method provides a more conservative estimate of reliability and one that reflects the conditions that maintain in most education research projects. (Borg and Gall, 1990, p 262)

e. Scale Scores

Once the reliability of the scales was confirmed the responses for each item within the scales were tabulated. The scores were taken from the surveys and ranged from 1 to 5: 1 for Strongly Agree to 5 for Strongly Disagree. For each parent participant, on each scale, the mean of the tabulated scores provided a Scale Score. In addition to individual scale scores, the mean responses of all parents to each question provided mean scale scores allowing the investigator to see the difference between individual scores and group responses. The Mean Scale Scores and Standard Deviations are provided in Appendix 2 .

f. Factor Analysis

Six variables were considered in this thesis. They were chosen from the nine parent survey scales (See Appendix 1) thought to be related to parent ratings of school. The original variables were: a. Scale 1: Parent perception of student/teacher communication, b. Scale 3: Parent perception of teacher/parent communication, c. Scale 4: Parent perception of teacher/parent communication, d. Scale 5: Parent perception of teacher concern about parent involvement, e. Scale 6: Parent perception of parent/school communication, and f. Scale 8: Parent perception of school climate.

A factor analysis was considered in order to see if it were possible to reduce the variables combining some that were moderately or highly correlated. The first step in the factor analysis procedure was the computation of a correlation matrix in which all individual parent scale scores was listed on a separate row and column. The computer analyzed every parent response within every scale to provide a matrix for identifying scales of high and low correlations. The correlation of any two of the scales is given at the point where the row and column cross. This provided a means of looking at every possible combination of scales. The correlation between a scale and itself is not shown, hence the diagonal pattern of numbers (See Appendix 3).

A factor analysis followed the creation of the correlation matrix. This involved a search for clusters of scales that were intercorrelated. Through this factor analysis Scales 1,3,4 and 6 were identified as being

intercorrelated. All of these scales dealt with communications between parent and school. Because of their intercorrelation and their content similarity they were thought to represent a single dimension.

g. Path Analysis

The correlation matrix was used to develop a speculative path analysis.

> Path analysis is a method for testing the validity of a theory about causal relationships between three or more variables that have been studied using a correlational research design...(It) is used solely to test theories about hypothesized causal links between variables... Path analysis provides a better basis for examining causal relationships in correlational data than other methods... (Borg and Gall, 1990, p.614)

This thesis was interested in finding a causal path through the variables (scales) to the outcome (parent rating of school). A lengthy debate among members of the project team eventually resulted in a temporary causal model of relationships. This temporary model:

> ... was tested by structural equation modelling, a version of path analysis that simultaneously tests a group of regression equations that constitute a model of causal relationships. (Coleman, Collinge and Seifert, 1992)

An except from their general model, as it pertains to this thesis, is presented in Figure 1. Coleman, Collinge and Seifert, 1992 (p.11) show the relationship between Scale 5 and Scale F as r = .710; between Scale F and Scale 8 as r = .507; between Scale 8 and Parent Rating of School as r = .589. All of these Pearson product-moment correlations are significant at the p. < .001 level. This suggested a conceptual path to guide an analysis of interviews.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for Qualitative Analys provided by Survey Data.

Relating the Quantitative Analysis

The causal relationships provided by the quantitative analysis guided the in-depth investigation of the parent interviews. Realizing that parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement is the first step in the causal chain leading to parent perceptions of school climate and parent ratings of school the investigator attempted to follow this chain through in-depth coding of interviews in order to understand the

linkages. Parent rating of school and parent perceptions of school climate(Scale 8) were seen as outcomes of parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement (Scale 5) and parent perceptions of communications with and from the school (Scale F). (See Figure 1)

Parent surveys were matched with parent interviews. Only those parents who were both surveyed and interviewed were used for the remaining research. This consisted of 33 sets of parent data. The sets were then analyzed according to their ratings of school. Those parents who rated the school as 8 or better out of nine were considered High Rating Parents for a total of 8 parents. Those who rated the school as 5 or lower were considered Low Rating Parents, a total of 6 parents. (See Appendix 6. Interviews identified as Hi or Lo).

Scale 8 (Parent perception of school climate) is predictive of parent rating of school with a reliability factor of .589. (Coleman, Collinge and Seifert, 1992). Mean Scale 8 scores for parents should provide a slightly expanded sample of high and low ratings from that provided by parent ratings of school alone. Parent ratings of school were all relatively high so that only 8 and 9 out of a possible 9 were considered high while the low rating parents gave ratings of 0 to 5. Many parents rated the school as 6 or 7. It was thought that by combining parent rating of schools with parent perception of school climate, the distinctions between high and low rating parents would be more clearly established.

The mean scale 8 scores for all interviewed parents was calculated and combined with the school rating scores. (See Appendix 4). The

combination of parent ratings of school scores and parent perception of school climate scores provided four more low rating parent interviews and one additional high rating parent interview for analysis. One parent interview (17202) was re-examined to see if it contained revealing information to explain why the parent rated the school very low (0 out of 9), yet perceived the school climate to be very good (1.2 with 1 being the highest possible score) This interview was included with the low rating parents initially because of its low rating of the school. Examination of the interview revealed a possible explanation for this phenomenon but it was maintained as a low rating parent interview because the patterns of responses fit largely with those of other low rating parents. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of problems related to this interview.

Data Collection and Analysis
The Interviews

Interview schedules were arranged with a random selection of parents who had all been surveyed. The random selection of parents to be interviewed was generated by computer to represent each site, that is spread evenly among all the research sites studied. Two or three parents were interviewed from each research site, depending on the number of survey respondents.

The open-ended interview questions were designed to elaborate on and qualify the questions from the survey. While the survey questions were structured and encouraged specific, focused answers the interviews

allowed parents the opportunity to elaborate on the ideas presented in the survey. (See Appendix 5 for a copy of the interview questions). The intent of the questions in the survey, as focused and directed toward the year of the survey, was quite different from the interview questions that allowed parents freedom to express feelings about previous teachers and relationships. It was very evident in the interviews that parents made reference to many teachers other than the one their child has "this year". Some differences between the quantitative and qualitative findings should be expected as a result of this difference.

Each available member of the research team conducted some interviews. The interviews used here were completed in the fall of 1990. As a training exercise, members of the research team conducted a series of interviews with parents who were not thesis participants. These interviews were tape recorded and subsequently analyzed to train researchers to a use a uniform approach to conducting interviews, as much as possible.

The parent subjects were interviewed in their homes or, if they preferred, in a private room at their child's school.

Coding

Method at this point was guided by Miles and Huberman's work on multi-site causal analysis (Miles and Huberman 1984). All interview data were taped and transcribed. The coding of the transcripts was a multistage process. Initially groups of research team members read

through the interviews and attempted to draw out categories. After repeated attempts and much argument a set of codes was devised. It was used by several team members for an initial set of interviews. The research team met again and was able to adjust the codes to accommodate the problems encountered by the "test group" of coders. Eventually the categories emerged and suitable codes were assigned. A Master Coding Sheet of categories resulted. (See Appendix 6). This was used by teams of graduate students to completely code the transcripts.

Clean parent transcripts were recoded by this investigator using the same Master Coding Sheet and then checked against the general group set. The coding categories developed from here were somewhat more specific than the general ones because the nature of this thesis is to examine types of parent involvement, a more specific aim than that of the research team as a whole. The additional codes provided a fourth level of coding to those items identified as parent involvement incidents in order to specify the involvement as Type 1 or Type 2. The actual coding symbols appear in bold print on the Master Coding Sheet. (See Appendix 5) The overlap of coding categories between the group and investigator sets was done, in part, for validation purposes. The process reassured the investigator, and hopefully the reader, of the replicability of the analysis.

Relating the Interview Data

The quantitative work provided information about parent ratings of school and parent perceptions of school climate, allowing for the selection of parent interviews for in-depth analysis (the High Rating Parents and the Low Rating Parents). Using these two groups of parents, their interviews were initially searched to see if specific types or frequency of parent involvement were characteristic of either group. Total incidents of parent involvement were counted for each interview. These were then split into Type 1 or Type 2 and compared to parent ratings of school and school climate. (See Appendix 8).

The conceptual framework provided by the quantitative data as developed by Coleman, Collinge and Seifert, (1992) provided direction for analysis of the interview data. The path analysis indicated that parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement lead to perceptions of communications with and from the school. These perceptions, in turn, helped determine the parental view of school climate and rating of school. The coded interviews were analyzed to discover clues, if they existed, to understanding this process and to revealing the significance, if any, of the different types of parent involvement.

Chapter 4: Findings

Similarities Between High and Low Rating Parents

The most striking similarity between the two groups was the total number of parent involvement incidents characteristic of each group. The high rating parents reported a total of 106 incidents of parent involvement. The low rating parents a total of 107 incidents. Parent involvement literature would suggest that there should be much more total involvement on behalf of the high rating parent group.

The interviews themselves reveal part of the reason why the number of incidents do not accurately reflect parent involvement. A high rating parent, explained that she worked each night on a reader with her child: "We went through a reader at home, each night for an hour and a half. (Interview # 16222) She did this for a whole year apparently, yet she mentions it only once so it is coded only once. This is in comparison to a parent who reported that he worked on math with his child one night and took him to the library for a research project the next month. This parent received two codes and was given twice the research recognition of the parent who does the reading activity each night for a year.

Likewise, another high rating parent expressed that: They have a phone-in program with the children who are absent. "I did that once a week for a year." A second similar response from the same parent: "They

had a hot snack program so I would go once a week and I really enjoyed it. We were also working with the teacher." (Interview 12211)

This type of long range involvement was reported more frequently by high rating parents than by the low rating ones. Total incidents of parent involvement do not accurately reflect long-term parent involvement. The extent and quality of parental involvement varies enormously and was not a focus of this thesis. It has obvious implications and would provide an interesting follow-up for further investigation.

That both low and high rating parents reported the same number of parent involvement incidents is congruent with Becker and Epstein's (1982) findings that all parents are equally likely to become involved in their children's education:

> Teachers who deal with college-educated parents, those who work with parents with average schooling and those whose students' parents have very little schooling are equally likely to be active users of parent-involvement strategies.(p.97)

Types of Involvement: High and Low Rating Parents:

Tables 1 and 2 give a summary of the types of involvement that high and low rating parent engage in.

Table 1
Parent Interview Analysis
High Rating Parents

	Total PI	Type 1	% of total	Type 2	% of total
16228 Hi	14	10	71	4	28*
21211 Hi	8	5	63	3	37*
16222 Hi	12	7	58	5	42*
12211 Hi	19	11	57	8	42*
21201 8H	10	4	40	6	60
23211 Hi	10	4	40	6	60
17226 Hi	13	5	38	8	61
14219 Hi	18	4	21	4	79
23213 HI	2	0	0	2	100

Total incidents of parent involvement for high rating parents:
14+8+12+19+10+10+13+18+2 = **106**

Mean % for parents giving school high ratings:

Type 1   71+63+58+57+40+40+38+21+0/9.00 =   **43.11%**

Type 2   28+37+42+42+60+60+61+79+100/9.00 =   **56.56%**

* (Asterisk) indicates those parents who show a pattern of more Type 1 than Type 2 parent involvement. This pattern is more typical of high rating parents than it is of low rating parents.

Table 2

Parent Interview Analysis

Low Rating Parents

	Total PI	Type 1	% of total	Type 2	% of total
14212 8L	19	10	52	9	47
17224 Lo	10	4	40	6	60*
12205 Lo	24	8	33	16	66*
13214 Lo	7	2	28	5	71*
17202 Lo	5	1	20	4	80*
11227 8L	11	2	18	9	81*
23222 Lo	15	2	13	13	86*
25201 Lo	8	1	12	7	87*
24209 8L	8	1	12	7	87*

Total incidents of parent involvement for low rating parents:

19+10+24+7+5+11+15+8+8 = **107**

Mean % for parents giving school low ratings

Type 1   52+40+33+28+20+18+13+12+12/9.00 =   **25.33%**

Type 2   47+60+66+71+80+81+86+87+87/9.00 =   **73.89%**

* (Asterisk) indicates those parents who show a pattern of more Type 2 than Type 1 parent involvement. This pattern is typical of low rating parents.

The high rating parents had slightly more Type 2 (parent involvement in instruction) than Type 1 (volunteering, attending school events etc.) involvement: 43.11% Type 1 and 56.56% Type 2. Four of the nine parents interviewed showed a pattern of more Type 1 than Type 2 involvement.

By themselves, the high rating parent interviews suggest little concerning the type of parent involvement that influences high parent ratings of schools. Taken with the low rating parents a clearer pattern emerges. Low rating parents engage very little in Type 1 parent involvement: 25.33%. Most of their involvement is of Type 2, 73.89%. Eight of the nine parent interviews studied reflected more Type 2 parent involvement than Type 1.

A distinct pattern emerges. Parents who rate the school highly engage more often in Type 1 parent involvement than low rating parents do. Almost three quarters of the parent involvement of low rating parents is Type 2 while only one quarter is Type 1. Parent ratings of school seem clearly related to Type 1 parent involvement.

Although there may be many confounding factors affecting the types of parent involvement that low and high rating parents exhibit, from this thesis it appears that **parent involvement in instruction needs to be supported by the type of parent involvement that facilitates good parent-teacher relationships**. In order to feel that they are welcome at the school and that teachers are interested in their participation parents need to be drawn into the school to participate there.

Coleman, Collinge and Seifert, (1992) in dealing with these same parent interviews express some bewilderment about why teachers don't involve parents in instruction more often.

> From this kind of statement, it is not hard to understand how
> a teacher's sense of professional efficacy is enhanced when

they choose to work with parents and focus this interaction on instructional matters. It is strange, then, that it does not happen more often. (p.17)

Perhaps the answer to the dilemma lies in the type of involvement necessary for high parental ratings of schools. Perhaps we will never see parents happily involved in their children's education unless they are also involved in the type of activity that brings them into personal contact with teachers.

Parent Perceptions of School Concern about Parent Involvement:

Survey data provided a starting point from which to launch analysis of the interviews. Parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement are predictive of parent ratings of schools (see Figure 1). The interviews provide a rich source of information from which some generalizations emerge.

a. Low rating parent responses:

Low rating parents typically did not feel as welcome in the school or did not see the teachers as interested in their involvement to the degree that high rating parent counterparts did.

Last year the teacher welcomed me to help. This year, it is a different teacher, he wanted to try some things on his own but now we're helping him more. He has realized that he can't do it just by himself (#17202)

Last year I would have liked to have gone into the school more and I wasn't welcomed....I wanted the library because that way I can go even if the teacher doesn't want me in the classroom...because although I always made the offer they don't necessarily want you in a classroom situation (#14212)

In response to the question: As parents, do you feel welcome in your child's school? a low rating parent responds:

"Well, not particularly. I find it institutionalized. You've still got to go through the secretary and then the office and etc. etc." (#23222)

I've never noticed that they needed any help in the classroom at this school. The teacher has never indicated that he would like parent help in the classroom... I don't think teachers have the time under the current game plan for parent participation... I get the impression that maybe the teachers don't want the parents around... I was available for two days a week and was never called (#23222)

Some (teachers) would prefer that you leave them alone to do what ever they are doing. When we did approach her on it we sort of got 'it is my classroom, my business, stay clear' type thing (#13214)

High and low rating parents were different in their perceptions of the school as a warm and inviting place to be. Their responses usually

reflected the quality of their feelings. The following come from a low rating parents.

> *Parent:* Yes
> *Interviewer:* What causes you to feel this way?
> *Parent:* Nobody ever stops me. I don't go to the school too often because of my little children, so when I do go it's...I think most times they welcome the parents to be there. It seems like that anyhow. (#17202)

> *Parent:* Yes and no. It depends on who you are going to see. It depends on the teacher. The grade 7 teacher is wonderful. He has no problems answering any of your questions or letting you know what he is doing. However, the other one that we deal with isn't as open in what she is doing.

Other low rating parents feel somewhat more welcome. Judging from the interviewer's response, one can infer that the parent's "yes" was somewhat guarded.

> *Parent:* Yes
> *Interviewer:* What do they do that makes you feel reasonably welcome?
> *Parent:* They are quite good about answering any questions. If I have ever phoned one of the teachers they always return the call as soon as they can. (#12205)

54

Two low rating parents expressed unqualified positive responses to the question of feeling welcome:

> Yep, I do. The teachers are quite warm. They tell you if there's a problem with the child, usually. And if you need more information they try to explain it to you. (#24209)

> Yes, I do. We've had a really good reception over there. (#11227)

Sometimes low rating parents see the principal as "the school". The root of their rating of the school may begin with their perception of the principal as an open or welcoming individual:

> As far as the principal goes, he doesn't let the parents talk (#24209)

> I really haven't had that much to do with the principal but maybe from my point of view it's his whole attitude. I guess I don't like him (#25201)

Generally, low rating parents report distanced or distrustful feelings about the receptivity of the school to their involvement. Most often they want to be invited to participate.

> ... if they identified a need I'm sure we would find a way to assist (#11227)

Really without them saying that they need any help there is not too much you can do. (#12205)

Low rating parents, generally, reflect a fear of rejection that hampers their willingness to become more involved in the school. These parents may not want to initiate parent involvement activities because they fear that their overtures may be refused.

b. High rating parent responses

High rating parent interviews reveal a much warmer perception of the school staff toward their involvement. Almost every high rating parent has a positive comment to make about the way he or she is received at the school. Typical of their responses are the following comments:

Everyone is very receptive and they, you know, can't do enough to help you (#23213)

In the elementary school they encourage us to participate in the classroom. They always make you welcome...go in the staff room and have coffee. In the newsletters home they're always saying...come in and visit. If you have any questions don't wait until it's too late...just a phone call, here we are. (#16228)

The school is friendly. the teachers are very friendly. They greet you when you walk in. How are you today? (#16222)

I get a big smile or whatever. I felt welcome that way. (#14219)

Parents want schools to be open and inviting. They would like the teachers to initiate parent involvement activities so they can be sure that their help is welcomed. Inferring from the comments that high rating parents are more efficacious it is incumbent upon teachers and principals to assure that all parents feel welcome. This is easier to instill in some parents than in others. Many low rating parents express having had experiences where the teacher didn't want them in the classroom or didn't even want their help with curricular work at home.

> ...teachers don't tell you how you can help your child and in fact you get the feeling that he is supposed to be doing it himself, I shouldn't help him. (#14212)

While low rating parents don't see the schools as very welcoming places, when teachers do reach out to them and initiate communication it is very appreciated:

> I think that the teacher should phone the parents - make a sort of a voice contact periodically. But I realize that is a lot of work for teachers too. But it is certainly nice to know... for example, this year Mrs. W- did contact me about D- earlier on and it was just so nice to know that she was concerned about him other than him just being a number on a report card. And, "Oh, I have to do this parent interview.' (#14212)

This same sense of appreciation by parents of teachers who expressed concern for the student was a conclusion of The Good Teacher: A Parent Perspective

> When teachers do indicate a concern for parent involvement
>
> by reaching out, it is very much appreciated, and seen as
>
> expressing real concern for student welfare. (Coleman and
>
> Tabin, 1992, p21)

Communications With and From the School

a. The Newsletter

In some respects the communications that high and low rating parents receive from the school are monotonously similar. One would presume that the parents' own children are the most frequent source of communication that parents have about the school. This is not reported in the interviews. Almost without exception parents report that their most frequent source of information from the school is the newsletter, a frequent publication of all elementary schools in B.C., it would seem.

High rating parent comments about the newsletter are "luke warm" in comparison with those of low rating parents. High rating parent #14219 is typical in her response to being asked if the school encourages parent involvement. "They do a weekly newsletter and in there they have what's happening in the building."

Low rating parents respond in a much more enthusiastic manner. They seem more appreciative of the newsletters than are the high rating parents. Commonly, the response from low rating parents is very positive.

The school is very good about sending newsletters. (#12205)

The regular newsletter is constantly beseeching the parents to be involved, not me or (my wife) or anyone, the parents generally. (#11227)

Something every day - notices coming home. They keep us very well informed (#14212)

The interviews throw no direct light on why low rating parents value the school newsletters more than the high rating parents do. Parents all seem to appreciate direct and specific written information about their child. Many references in both the low and high rating parents expressed appreciation of the teacher practice of routinely sending student work home to be signed and returned to the school. Parents like the regular communication that informs them daily, weekly or monthly of school activities. "...the teacher used to send home a bit of a newsletter every month saying, we learned such and such in math and reading. And it was great. Then I knew where he was." (#23222)

These conclusions were also reported by Coleman and Tabin, (1992) who used the same, and more extensive, survey and interview

data to discover what a "good teacher" does from the perspective of a parent. (p.11-16)

Since the newsletter is, by far, the most commonly reported source of communication from the school, the very positive response by the low rating parents is somewhat puzzling. It would be valuable to study the reason for this phenomenon. Perhaps the answer lies in the type of parent involvement practiced by low rating parents (Type 2). These parents rarely go into the school except for formal parent interviews or if there is a problem with their child. Their sources of communication with the school are rarely personal. They rely on the newsletter to know what is happening at school. Perhaps that is why high rating parents are more "luke warm" about the newsletters generally. They know what is happening in the school through direct personal involvement.

Personal contact seems to be an important factor in parent - school communications. The one low rating parent who is atypical in her pattern of parent involvement, that is she engages in more type 1(volunteering, attending school events etc.) than type 2 (involvement in instruction) seems to have a clear sense of the need for personal contact. "It is not personal enough. If I didn't make the effort to go into the school as I do we would have no personal contact with the teachers at all other than interview days and that would not be sufficient." (#14212)

High rating parents may have a clearer sense of the value of parent involvement. One parent expresses this clearly:

She always strives to get good marks. I know a lot of that is because we expect her to. She's trying to please us but I think she would feel uncomfortable if she wasn't doing the best. She likes to be the top of the class. She does her homework without any complaining. She just gets right to it.(#16228)

High rating parents are characterized by more Type 1 involvement. They are in the school more often than low rating parents. The interview data don't discuss the communications that parents have with teachers and principal while they are volunteering, attending school events or participating in parent advisory meetings. The implication however is that these are rich sources of parent - school communication through which parents come to appreciate the efforts of school professionals. High rating parents give some insight into the richness of personal contact:

I even visit (S -'s) teacher and he asks and shares some personal things. They always have time for me. (#21201)

When he talks to me about her he makes her very much an individual. It's not like she's part of a crew.(#16222)

One can only speculate that the richness of personal contact provides high rating parents with better information about the schools than the newsletters do, therefore high rating parents don't value the newsletters as much as the low rating ones do.

b. Formal Parent - Teacher Interviews

The other form of communication mentioned by most parents is the the formal parent-teacher interview. In most cases the information flow is one way, from the teacher to the parent. The teacher talks about student achievement, attitude, behaviour or social interactions. The following comment from a high rating parent is typical of all parents: "...the child shows you their school work and then the teacher talks about school work and your child to you." (#12211)

Coleman and Tabin, (1992) are explicit about the problems of too little parent - teacher exchange during the formal interviews:

> When they do occur they are too short and parents feel pressured to get in and out as quickly as possible. For the most part, they listen while the teacher talks about the achievement of their child. They ask questions about achievement, but are rarely asked by the teacher to provide information about their child. This mother explains:
>
> "At the one conference this year more time was spent...sort of discussing how I see my son is doing...as opposed to often in the past the teacher would give her information on how the child is doing so this conference was one that was more with both of us talking and both of us sharing information. It was very positive." (p.13)

The one-way information giving that characterizes most formal parent - teacher interviews is a classic example of the "meaning resides in the message" and leaves the parent without avenue to question and solicit understanding. "...one-way information-giving tends to assume that meaning resides in the message, rather than in the intended receiver's perception and interpretation of the message." (Lucas and Lusthaus, 1977, p.1)

The formal parent - teacher interview is often the only time the low rating parent personally visits the school. It is often an uncomfortable time for the parents. They see the formal interview more as something they should do rather than something they feel comfortable doing. This evidence corroborates the findings of the value of Type 1 parent involvement. Parents who do not feel welcome in the school, do not go there very often and do not see the schools as being good places for their children. The formal parent - teacher interview does little if anything to make parents feel more welcome.

Parents want more communication from the school. A sentiment expressed by both low and high rating parents is evidenced in these comments:

I don't think there's enough communication between parents
and teachers (#25201)

We get letters home from the teachers periodically about
'This is the method I use for marking' or whatever but it is

63

very impersonal and I don't feel that that is very productive
(#14212)

When the desire for more communication is combined with types of parent involvement typical of high rating parents, the conclusion may be drawn that it is **personal communications** that are needed, not simply more or better newsletters.

Parent - Teacher Relationships

High and low rating parents are distinctly different in their perception of parent - teacher relations. Low rating parents see the relationship between parents and teachers as cooler or more distant than high rating parents usually do. In response to the question: *What words come to mind when I talk about the relationship between parents and teachers?* typical low rating parent responses are:

Aloof (#23222)

A wall. I don't think there's enough communication between parents and teachers. Why didn't the teacher phone me and say, is there problems at home? (#25201)

Fair (#24209)

Distant. Yeah, we just don't see each other even though we're working toward a common goal. (#11227)

It's not personal enough. If I didn't make the effort to go into the school as I do we would have no personal contact with

64

the teachers at all other than interview days and that would
not be sufficient (#14212)

High rating parents have much warmer relations with teachers.
Their comments in response to the same question are consistently
positive:

Cooperation (#12211)

Well I would say in most cases, very good (#21211)

A team, supporting each other (#14219)

Good (#16228)

Respect, honest and open-minded. I think honest and open
mindedness but I think respect is really the foremost
(#23213)

They are friendly (#23211)

Good, they inform us. (#21201)

Parent perceptions of parent - teacher relations are directly related
to parent ratings of school. Among the high rating parents there were no
exceptions to this. All of them spoke warmly of their relations with the
teacher. Low rating parents were much cooler in their responses. The
most favourable or warmest response from the low rating parents was an

acknowledgment that: "If I do have a problem, I can go over and talk to one of the teachers." (#12205)

More than any other single factor, the parent perception of teacher - parent relations reflects most directly the ratings that parents give to schools. If the parent - teacher relationships are seen as good, the parent gives the school a high rating, either in the form of direct rating of school or in their perception of school climate. If parent perceptions of teacher - parent relations are poor, the parent rates the school accordingly.

The interviews tell what parents want from teachers. When teachers have helped parents learn how to work with their child, it is always appreciated. These parents speak for many low rating parents in expressing their appreciation of teacher efforts to show them how to help their child.

> Very definitely. Yes, that's been a pleasant experience...He helped me get by a real tough problem in math with Greg, little shortcut ways to get through to him (#11227 Lo)

> We had a real hot shot in grade one who was just an incredible woman. She sat down with all the parents and explained everything. (#23222)

High rating parents do not express the same degree of appreciation for parent involvement training that low rating parents express. One can infer that low rating parents do not feel as efficacious as high rating ones. They do not feel the same confidence about their

roles as parents so when teachers show them ways to help their child they respond with enthusiasm.

> ...skills of teachers and parents for working together are not well developed, ...some mistrust of each other, especially in low-income areas, is present, and that parents often feel that they lack certain skills needed to help educate children, especially as the children grow older. (Moles, 1987, p. 144)

Evidence from the interviews on low rating parent appreciation of newsletters and low rating parent appreciation of teacher efforts to train them to help with instruction of their child interfaces with Epstein's work:

> Teachers and parents rated each other more positively when the teacher used frequent parent involvement practices. Parents rated these teachers higher in overall teaching ability and interpersonal skills. (Epstein, 1987, p.127-128)

> Teachers earn higher ratings from parents when they use parent involvement activities with more parents, send more communications home...(Epstein, 1985, p.8)

Coleman and Tabin (1992) confirm that it is very important for teachers to form good relations with all parents.

> ...this suggests an important task for teachers which is probably not usually considered - they must establish a positive relationship with each of a group of parents of

whom some have not enjoyed such relationships with previous teachers (p.20)

Expressions of Appreciation and Concern

Many parental comments portray the essence of what they want from teachers and schools. High rating parents often express this in terms of what they already have. Low rating parents express their frustration at the lack of it.

a. Parent involvement training needed

All parents express an appreciation of parent involvement training. Invariably they rate the teacher highly when the teacher takes time to help them with individual problems they encounter with their children. High rating parents express this:

> ...she helped me over some hard times when I had difficulty (#21211)

> It helped me at least with R - now because she has started to read at an early age. She could read way before the boys could read. (#21201)

> I see the whole thing working with parents is really important (#14219)

This is the first year they've sent home for every parent volunteer, whatever you do and so if needed they would call for say crafts or art. (#12211)

Unlike high rating parents who seem able to volunteer without invitation or who are able to accept the invitations that they get, low rating parents often express a frustration that they are not invited by the teacher to become involved. Many feel their involvement is limited to such invitations from the school.

Really without them saying that they need any help there is not too much you can do.

...she started her timetables and I mentioned to the teacher over there, "should I do up flash cards?" and I was told no, that they were going to make learning fun and they were going to pick up the timetables through these games. So I came home and I talked to (my husband) and I said, "that's bull shit, that there are a number of things that you have to do by memory. (#12205)

I don't find the activity level is as high as it could be, not as it should be necessarily, but for team sports and stuff like that, I don't find the emphasis is that strong nowadays. But that kind of thing, like I enjoy coaching baseball and soccer and stuff like that . (I could do more of that) if (I) were invited (#23222)

I was available these two days and I was never called (#23222)

The interviews express that the schools do invite parents to become involved. Some of the differences between high rating parents who accept the invitations and low rating parents who don't feel invited probably lies in the efficacious feelings of the parents. In order to reach all parents teachers have to make special and personal invitations to parents to help them all feel welcome and able to participate.

Parent involvement training emerges as an important factor in parent rating of teachers. One parent expresses the feelings that so many hint at: "Teaching the parents how to help...I see that as really valuable because I think there are a lot of parents who want to help but who don't quite know how." (#14219)

Sometimes parent perceptions of teachers are not congruent with parent ratings of schools. The parental perception of the principal, as expressed earlier in this chapter may explain part of this difference. Another factor seems to be the willingness on the part of the teacher to help parents learn ways to assist their own child(ren). Several low rating parents express their appreciation of the teacher because of the parent perceived interest of the teacher in the individual child or in parent involvement training.

> The grade 7 teacher is wonderful. He has no problem answering any of your questions or letting you know what he is doing.

He runs a rather open classroom. You can go in any time. he has no problem with that.

He is a wonderful teacher. I have never seen C - want to work for anybody as hard as he has for Mr. K -. He just seems to bring out the best in every child. He is an amazing teacher.(#13214)

If you have any problems with your child they'll speak to you or vice versa (#12211)

This one (teacher) has been good. The newer ones coming out they seem to be a little more educated and they want to take the time to teach the kids. (#24209)

But there's been excellent rapport (with the teachers), just excellent in that regard. They're concerned. (#11227)

Coleman and Tabin (1992) made very similar observations: "When teachers do indicate a concern for parent involvement by reaching out, it is very much appreciated, and seen as expressing real concern for student welfare." (p.21)

Just as low rating parents rate teachers who offer parent involvement training or who express concern for the individual child, high rating parents are critical of teachers who don't offer training or who do not value parent involvement.

In T -'s class we haven't had any encouragement to help out
at all. With T - it is difficult. It's a new teacher with very little
contact.... So far we've only seen him once. (#21201)

I heard her comment once that parents were there to feed
and clothe their children and give them a lot of love at home
and she was there to teach them. Parents weren't expert at
teaching so they probably wouldn't be much of an
assistance to her.... This is the same teacher who felt that
parents should be at home nurturing their children and not
interfering with their education (#16228)

Low rating parents seem surprised but delighted when teachers
acknowledge their efforts to speak on behalf of their child. "Yes, he even
told me that he was glad that I came to see him about certain things that
were going on in the school." (#23222)

Poor parent - teacher relations and the low rating parent's feelings
of not being welcome in the school sometimes manifest themselves in
very defensive comments about their child and their lack of involvement.
Parent (#12205) expresses her anticipation: "We have nothing but fights
with various teachers of H -'s....I tend to walk in expecting a confrontation."

Other parents express their defensive feelings by blaming changes
within the schools for their failure to be able to help their child:

...but because of the way they teach them now, it's wrong....I
think it's wrong the way they've changed it. I really do. They
want us to help them. How can we help them if we're
confusing them? (#25201)

72

Equally defensive though presented in the guise of offense is the low parent's conclusion that teachers only want help from the parents because they don't know how to teach. Initially these comments seemed legitimate, if rather bizarre, arguments for the parent's attitude toward parent involvement but taken with all the earlier statements he makes about efforts to help his child it becomes obvious that his statements reflect his own defensive reaction to being asked to do something he does not feel very capable of:

> ...if you have to go to the parents and say, "I can't teach your kid, help me out"....well you are supposed to be teaching the kid this, not me, like that is why we are sending him to school....That is something that I have found more since our kids started school - that the teachers are asking more of the parents, more so than my parents were. (#13214)

A similar kind of statement from another low rating parent (#25201) expresses her feelings of being threatened by teacher requests for parent help at home. Throughout her interview she expresses her frustration in not knowing how to help her child at home, yet when asked if the school encourages her involvement she responds:

> I think they push it on you. Well, different notices that have come up like, we expect you to be there. Well, nobody tells me what to do... there's some people that can get totally involved with the whole school system. I'm not one of those

people. I never did it with her two older sisters and I'm not about to start it with her...It's not my bag.

High rating parent interviews express joy in some of the things that low rating parents lack. Typical of this is the appreciation the high rating parents express in watching children and learning from them.

When the parents and children could work together, like the gingerbread house. I thought that was great! (#16222)

Watching your child learn was quite, really interesting....because they're very interesting...things they figure out for themselves, some of the things they say and talk about. It's quite interesting. And they're teaching you things too. (#12211)

The comments of this last parent reflect the parent involvement training that must take place quite naturally during many Type 1 parent involvement activities. It can be inferred from this type of comment that Type 1 (volunteering etc.) activities provide a natural way for parents to learn how to help their child at home. This may be critical in understanding why Type 1 parent involvement is important to positive parent ratings of schools. Again and again the appreciation of or the need for parent involvement training is expressed throughout the parent interviews. In response to the request, 'Could you describe ways in which you and the teacher work together at the moment', a low rating parent responds:

74

At the moment there isn't any, none whatsoever....Now, you tell me how you can do it. If you don't understand it you can't do it, can you? We went to a parent-teacher meeting and I don't feel that we solved anything. (#25201)

Later in the same interview the parent expresses conviction that the teacher won't provide her with training to help her child. She says she has "never" had a teacher help her learn things that enable her to assist her child with school work.

Other parents look beyond the teacher to the system in order to secure the necessary help to effectively help their own child:

If there's somehow or other we could have some fact sheets and God knows those people have enough to do already without providing information for parents. If there could be - maybe this goes beyond the teacher to the system - a companion book that goes with their math book, something that we could use, not as elaborate that the teacher uses. (#11227)

Similar empathy for the demands on a teacher's time come from parent interview #23222.

I don't think teachers have the time under the current game plan for parent participation....I'm looking at it for my own son but multiply that by twenty-nine or thirty or thirty-five students

in the classroom. I'm not always sure that that is a good thing.

Convinced that teachers won't have time for parent involvement, interviewed parent #14212 responds to being asked about the relationship between parents and teachers as seen by the teachers: "They'd say, I don't have time for that."

Teachers who make the time to provide parent involvement training rise high in the eyes of parents. This thesis reinforces research from many sources confirming that parent involvement training is probably one of the most effective ways for teachers to spend their time. Teachers, students and parents all benefit from parent involvement training as it translates into parent involvement in instruction.

b. Effective communication needed

Parents want to be informed. Comments expressing the need for effective communication between school and home emerge from both high and low rating parents. Parents sometimes seek the communication they need.

> We found his reading wasn't where it should be and just
> going in and getting his reader and he would read ahead of
> the rest of the class. I think for all of grade 2 he was
> probably way ahead of all the others and he became a good
> reader after not reading at all and didn't like books at all.
> (#21201)

All parents express the need for better communications. One high rating parent expresses this calmly but with insight into the superficial nature of most communications. One can infer that the information that would allow a parent to help a child in instructional matters is usually not present.

> I don't think there is all that much coming home. Periodically there are things that will come, information, as I say, about field trips or something but I don't see a whole lot on what they're studying.(#16222)

Parents see telephone calls from teachers as usually negative. "Not unless they're having problems with your child they don't call." (#12211)

Frustration and sometimes anger are expressed by parents when schools take arbitrary action with their children and they aren't informed adequately. The following interviews express this clearly.

> The whole year of grade 5 I wasn't aware of the problem until the end of the year and then they said that they didn't know if they should keep her back for grade 5 again or let her go into grade 6 being that she'd be in a new school. Nobody would know and she could redo grade 5 or whatever then they said that she was just so borderline that I think I should have known a lot sooner than that.... More communication is necessary I would say. (#16222)

I was told that she would be in learning assistance for three weeks. Three weeks turned into three months and I had no idea that she was still in there, for all my phone calls.

Three or four years ago she was in the classroom. She was going to school and by the time she got to school she was in tears. I finally did talk to the teachers and it was my doing. I went to her. She didn't come to me.... Why didn't the teacher phone me and say, is there problems at home? If she was coming to school crying and upset the teacher should have phoned, I feel anyway. (#25201)

Clearly, parents want effective, frequent communication from schools. If this communication comes with some training for parent involvement parents are very appreciative and give the teacher high ratings for her/his efforts.

Minor Themes Emerge

a.   Parents see declining parent involvement with age as natural

Parent interviews reflect the consistent finding that parent involvement tends to drop off significantly after grade 1. The interviews conducted here all are with parents who have a child in grade 6 or grade 7. Generally they don't see much parent involvement in these intermediate classrooms and often don't expect it, although some indicate they would be pleased to help if asked.

I guess you just don't hear of it often happening at the grade 7 level, other than field trips and that sort of thing. I was quite surprised when I was asked to help in grade 5 and was pleased. I just don't often hear of that happening. (#23222)

Another parent discussed with the child the possibility of the parent volunteering in the classroom. The student didn't want the parent in the classroom and the parent agreed that "at her age" she doesn't think it is necessary. Other parents express the same feelings:

...but I think the kids are probably wanting a little more independence from mom and dad too. There's probably still kids that could use the extra help, somebody extra to read to them. It's probably the age where the kids, it's kind of a natural thing (#14219)

In The Good Teacher: A Parent Perspective, Coleman and Tabin, (1992) make similar findings. In their discussion of parent involvement activities reported by parents they conclude: "Parents certainly feel this difference between grade levels. It seems to be a combination of teacher attitude and perceived student attitude." (p.18)

Generally speaking parents don't get involved in classroom volunteering when their children leave the primary grades. This is a national and even international phenomenon. It is so common that one

could concur with the perceptions of the parent who notes "it's kind of a natural thing" (# 14219)

b.   Parental perceptions usually shaped by previous experience

In the methodology outlined for this thesis it was noted that one of the significant differences between the quantitative and qualitative data are the open-ended nature of the latter. The survey questions asked parents for their reactions focused on the present year of their child's schooling. The interview questions allowed for and encouraged considerable reference to the origins of parental feelings or points of view. This was very evident in the interviews examined for this thesis. Only two of the parents had not had previous years of experience with the school system on which to reflect and form opinions. Their views of teachers and schooling were as often about past years as they were about the current ones. In the case of low rating parents one can infer that, in the cases where they express appreciation for the present teacher, that their rating of the school is based on past experiences as well.

The multi-grade view of parental perceptions as recorded in the interview may be quite different from those recorded in the surveys. Directions for the surveys clearly directed the parents' focus to the year of

the interview. Researchers conducting the interviews allowed and encouraged parents to explore the origins of their perceptions whether founded in the current year or in prior experiences.

c. Parents do not value parent advisory councils

Several parents mentioned that they had attended one or two parent advisory council meetings. None of them mentioned these as useful to them and only one mentioned that she still attends "occasionally". Parents in this thesis support the findings of Lucas and Lusthaus, (1977) that parent advisory groups are formed of a small elite group of parents who serve to justify the professional decisions of the school staff to the parents. Parent advisory groups don't help parents solve their communication or instructional problems with the school.

d. Parents listen to their children

Parents make many comments about their child's reaction to the teacher. When the child's response is positive, the parent expresses appreciation for the teacher. The parental attitude toward the teacher is often mediated through the child. The interviews are filled with statements reflecting parental attention to student reactions to teachers. Parent interview #21201 expresses this for most parents: "He respects his teacher and works well with him."

Parent #14219 is boisterous about her knowledge that the teacher respects the child though her comments are not so cohesive:

(The teacher) showing me what she's doing, praising her (the child), just the things like you know, with a big grin...we're okay and we like each other

The critical importance of parent involvement training and effective communication serve, with the themes identified here as minor, to help explain the reality of parental ratings of schools. They help to solve the "riddle" of why high parent ratings of schools are associated with Type 1 parent involvement activities. The summary of findings in chapter five presents a possible scenario of factors considered in this analysis to be used by educators to improve parent ratings of schools.

Chapter 5: Summary

Projects for Further Investigation

Several unanswered questions arise from this thesis:

1. Why do low rating parents value the school newsletter while high rating parents give it only passing comment? Research into the type of communications that lead to high parent rating of schools would provide researchers with greater understanding in order to encourage significant and worthwhile innovations involving parents in the school system.

2. Is high parent rating of schools dependent upon good parent - teacher relationships? This thesis was not looking at parent - teacher relationships in particular as they were not included in the path analysis framework provided by the quantitative data. These relationships were obviously dichotomous. The high and low rating parents had clearly different perceptions of their relationships with teachers. The differences between the two groups were so striking that they emerged clearly from the interviews. The very essence of Type One parent involvement seems to be knowing the teacher. The interview data were clear in depicting high rating parents as those with positive relationships with teachers and low rating parents as those with poor parent-teacher relationships. The identification of the types of parent involvement for this thesis become

clearer and a more useful succinct definition emerges. It is clear that Type One parent involvement included those activities identified as means of **getting to know the teacher.** Type Two involvement remains as those activities where the parent works directly with his/her own child.

3. Perhaps the most interesting project for further investigation, at least for the author, would be the examination of the variables within different types of parent involvement in order to ascertain which of the variables is determining of parent rating of schools. This would be an extension of this thesis in order to investigate the theory presented in the final summary of findings concerning the importance of Type 1 parent involvement activities. (See summary of findings later in this chapter)

Reflections on the Research Design

In some ways, the quantitative and interview analyses interfaced congruently. The most striking agreement between the two types of information collection and analysis was the relationship between parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement and parent ratings of school. Both research approaches confirmed that the better the relationship between teachers and parents, the higher the parent rates the school.

The prediction that parent perceptions of communications to and from the school would reflect parent perceptions of school climate and parent ratings of school was not reinforced by the qualitative data. The newsletter was the most frequently mentioned source of communication

by all parents. Newsletters were particularly appreciated by low rating parents and only given passing mention by high rating parents. The need for more personal contact was expressed by low rating parents. Further research on home - school communications is needed to understand how they affect parent perceptions of schools.

The preliminary findings gleaned from the survey data were provided a type of hypothesis for understanding the dimensions of parent ratings of schools. The interview data added depth and understanding to these findings. Some of the findings of this thesis were from interview data alone.

The two research methods were not particularly consistent yet each provides insights into the reality of parent - teacher interactions and particularly into parental responses to schools. Like Coleman and Tabin, (1992), this research found the two approaches "complementary, although not congruent" (p.24)

This research might have been conducted as a qualitative piece. The analysis of the interviews would have revealed very similar findings. The analysis would have included all of the interviewed parents. Parent ratings of schools would not have been a focus or direction for the study. The functions of personal interactions and perceptions would have emerged equally well, if not better.

If this thesis had been limited to a quantitative study, it would have lacked the rich understanding that the interview data provide. A purely qualitative study, on the other hand, would not have utilized the high and

low rating parents in order to establish differences between the two groups. The linking of the two methods provides reinforcing measures of reliability for both.

Sources of Error

All members of the "collaborative research team" sought to eliminate as many sources of error as possible through rigorous attention to research design, careful data collection and training of personnel. All research involving volunteers is suspect to some extent and that is acknowledged. Efforts were made to assure as little bias in the sampling as possible.

The particular problem that arose in this thesis was the strange phenomenon of having one parent rate the school very low, yet perceive the school climate as very good. Originally the parent was included as a low rating parent because of her rating of the school. It was hoped that an examination of the interview would reveal whether the interview should be included in the high rating group, the low rating group or completely discarded.

This was a foster or adoptive parent with only the one child. "We have only had T- for a year and a half now." (#17202)

In all respects this interview was a typical example of a low rating parent. She did not feel very welcome at the school although she acknowledged: "Nobody ever stops me. I don't go to the school too often..." She sees the teacher as not wanting her help as a parent: "This

year, it is a different teacher, he wanted to try some things on his own but now he's...we're helping him more. He has realized that he can't do it just by himself." (#17202)

This parent liked the frequent newsletters and expanded upon all the information that they provided. The interview was cut short before the parent expressed her perceptions of parent - teacher relations. The transcriber makes the comment: "the machine ate the tape at this point".

Because of the consistent similarities between this interview and the other low rating ones, it was maintained as a low rating one. Perhaps the interview should have been discarded altogether. It was felt that the inclusion or exclusion of the interview would not have significantly affected any of the outcomes. It is acknowledged, however, that this may be a source of some error in the results.

Sources of Data

This thesis began with an explanation of quantitative data analysis which provided a orientation and framework for a subsequent interview analysis of some of the same subjects. The quantitative work provided a means of identifying high and low rating parents through survey items and a framework or hypothesis for guiding the interview analysis. In questionnaires parents rated the school and answered a series of sixty-one other questions that were grouped into scales. The scales represented categories of behaviour thought to be important to collaboration between parents, teachers and students. One of the scales

(8) became an outcome, along with parent ratings of school. Scale 8 measured parental perceptions of school climate which was correlated to parent ratings of school with a Pearson product-moment relationship of .589. The two outcomes provided for an even split between high and low rating parents. Nine parent interviews were examined for each category of parent ratings.

The quantitative data provided further guidance for the beginning of the interview analysis. Other parent scales were thought to be important to parent perceptions of school climate and to parent ratings of school. The theory of how they were related was checked with related scales determined by the correlation matrix. Through factor analysis four parent scales were united to form a composite scale including all the ways that parents and schools communicate. This new scale and the scale measuring parent perceptions of teacher concern about parent involvement provided guidelines for beginning an analysis of coded parent interviews.

The coded interviews, divided into high and low rating, were rich sources of data. Fascinating, anticipated and unanticipated outcomes emerged.

Anticipated Outcomes

a. Low rating parents did not feel very welcome in the schools. They viewed the teachers and/or principal as uninterested in their involvement as parents. **High rating parents perceived the school staffs as very welcoming and eager for their input.**

b. Parent - teacher relations with low rating parents were strained. Terms like; aloof, a wall, fair, distant and not personal enough characterized the perceptions given by low rating parents of the relationship between parents and teachers. **High rating parents enjoyed positive parent - teacher relations.** Cooperative, good, supportive, respectful and friendly characterized these reports.

Unexpected Outcomes

a. Low and high rating parents had about the same number of reported incidents of parent involvement. Low rating parents reported 107 incidents of parent involvement. High rating parents reported 106 incidents.

b. High rating parents engaged in Type 1 parent involvement (volunteering, attending school events etc.) **more than low rating parents did.** Low rating parents put 24 percent of their parent

involvement energy into Type 1 activities. High rating parents put 43 percent into Type 1 activities.

c. Five of the nine high rating parent interviews revealed a pattern of more Type 2 than Type 1 parent involvement. Eight of the nine low rating parent interviews had this pattern of involvement. **Type 1 parent involvement seems important to high ratings of school by parents.**

d. Low rating parents were very appreciative of the school newsletter as a means of communication. High rating parents acknowledged the newsletter but did not seem to attach as much value to them.

Summary of Findings

A summary of findings for this thesis would be incomplete without attempting to find meaning, relevance and research significance. The findings themselves do not constitute the whole picture. The whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. These findings may have significance for parents, teachers, principals and future researchers.

The expected findings are, by definition, expected because they are supported by research. The unexpected outcomes are fascinating and offer some leeway for the expression of theories of explanation. At first glance they seemed "out of step" with other research. Upon

examination of them individually and in conjunction with each other possible and likely answers present themselves.

Examination of the Unexpected: in Part and in Whole

Low and high rating parents had about the same number of reported incidents of parent involvement. This phenomenon although not expected, could have been. By extension of the findings of Becker and Epstein in 1982, one can expect all parents to be equally likely to engage in parent involvement activities. (See quotation in Chapter 4) What is not studied in this, and in Becker and Epstein's work is the extent and the quality of the parent involvement. At this time we do not know which, if either, low or high rating parents engage in more "quality" parent involvement.

High rating parents engaged in Type 1 parent involvement (volunteering, attending school events etc.) *more than low rating parents did.* The most fascinating, unexpected and perhaps greatest contribution of this research is the finding that revealed that **Type 1 parent involvement is associated with high parent rating of schools.**

Many researchers have attempted to typify parent involvement (See Chapter 2) however parent involvement in instruction has emerged as a distinct type during the past few years. It is the only type of parent involvement that is associated with greater than expected student

achievement. Even with this clarity we do not know how often a parent volunteering in a classroom actually helps his or her own child with instruction. We don't know how often parents meet teachers at school events and discuss the child in ways that would assist the parent at home. We cannot be sure that parent involvement types are really as distinct as they seem from the interviews. The recognition that Type 1 parent involvement is synonymous with "getting to know the teacher" helps to explain why that type of involvement is crucial to effective use of parents as instructors of their children. There is something about Type 1 involvement that leads parents to appreciate the school. **Type 1 involvement builds parent-teacher relationships, provides personal contact and multiple channels for effective communication.**

Parents are concerned that there is not enough face to face contact between teachers and parents. One or two formal interviews per year are not sufficient. (Coleman and Tabin, 1992, p.13)

Parents, through the interviews, speak clearly of what is needed for high parent rating of school. **Parents want personal contact, not more or better newsletters, they want good relations with teachers, they want training in order to better help their own children.** All of these elements are achieved by high rating parents...the parents who engage in Type 1 parent involvement. If this theory is correct, then the implications for teachers and researchers is to seek

personal contact with parents in order to establish positive parent-teacher relationships, initiate parent involvement and help parents with instruction. This thesis would imply that traditional methods, newsletters home etc. are not enough. The parent who rejoiced in the "hot shot" teacher her child had in grade one reflects the impact of personal contact at the school on parent efficacy and parent perceptions of the teacher. Both the personal contact and the parent involvement training are reflected in this parent's statement:

We had a real hot shot in grade one who was just an incredible woman. She sat down with all the parents and explained everything. (#23222)

Parents who engage in Type 1 activities probably have many opportunities to see more of these "incredible" people.

A Visual Representation of Theoretical Relationships

Probable source of communication from schools?
High - **Face to face communication with teachers**
Low - **newsletters**

Relations with teachers?
High - **Good**
Low - **Strained**

Type of Involvement
Parent Rating of schools

Parents feel welcome in schools?
High - **Yes**
Low - **No**

Parent training for involvement with ones own child
High - **probably occurs naturally during some Type activities**
Low - **an expressed need and appreciation for.**

Parents have personal contact with teachers and principal?
High - **Yes**
Low - **No**

Figure 2

The diagram in figure 2 presents a conceptualization of how the factors influencing parent ratings of schools might be tied to types of parent involvement. Training for parent involvement is seen as a factor influencing parent rating of teachers and of importance to both low and high rating parents. Type 1 parent involvement seems to facilitate personal contact, effective communications, parent involvement training,

and good relations with teachers. It is unclear what direction the association goes. Further study is needed to provide repetition of this study and a path analysis to explain which is the cause and which, the effect.

This research makes a small but significant step in helping educators unravel the marvelous complexity of human behaviour insofar as it is pertinent to parent involvement with schooling. As researchers and teachers look to finding ways of involving parents in instructional matters, perhaps they will consider the knowledge that parent involvement in volunteer-type activities increases the probability that parents will rate the schools highly.

Appendix 1

PARENT SURVEY Time 1 - Scale Reliabilities

<u>Scale 1.   Parent perception of student/teacher communication.</u>
Cronbach's Alpha: .66. Items with corrected item-total correlations:
.37   16. My child's teacher(s) makes sure my child understands homework assignments.
.55   23. My child feels comfortable approaching teacher(s) with schoolwork questions or concerns.
.54   46. My child feels comfortable asking the teacher(s) for help.
.48   48. My child feels that her/his learning is important to the teacher(s).
<u>Scale 2.   Parent perception of student/parent communication.</u>
Cronbach's Alpha: .82. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":
.56   3. My child keeps me informed about class-room activities.
.47   8. My child talks to me about his/her plans for schooling in the future.
.63   12. My child lets me know when s/he is having problems in the class.
.65   13. My child usually discusses homework with me.
.69   17. My child keeps me informed about school activities.
.56   55. My child lets me know when he/she needs help with a homework assignment.
<u>Scale 3.   Parent perception of teacher/parent communication (instruction).</u>
Cronbach's Alpha: .72. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":
.60   5. My child's teacher(s) provides information about instructional programs so that I understand my child's schoolwork.
.55   7. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about homework assignments.
.55   15. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about what my child is learning in the classroom.
.36   53. My child's teacher(s) gives me information which allows me help my child with homework.
<u>Scale 4.   Parent perception of teacher/parent communication (general).</u>
Cronbach's Alpha: .65. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":
.54   6. My child's teacher(s) keeps me informed about class-room activities.
.43   19. My child's teacher(s) informs me when my child is doing well in class.
.28   33. I feel satisfied with my interviews with my child's teacher(s).
.36   56. My child's teacher(s) often asks me to help.
.45   61. My child's teacher(s) works hard to interest and excite parents.
<u>Scale 5.   Parent perception of teacher concern about parent involvement</u>
Cronbach's Alpha: .81. Items with "corrected item-total correlations":
.54   27. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's work in class, if necessary.

.48   29. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's homework, if necessary.

.59   31. I am sure that my child's teacher(s) will contact me about my child's behaviour, if necessary.

.56   37. My child's teacher(s) makes me feel part of a team.

.72   39. My child's teacher(s) seems interested in hearing my opinions about my child.

.50   40. Parents find teachers easily approachable at this school.

.61   44. My child's teacher(s) makes time to talk to me when it is necessary.

Scale 6.   Parent perception of parent/school communication

Cronbach's Alpha: .78.   Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

.38   2. I call/visit my child's teacher(s) to ilk about my child's progress.

.43   9. I talk to my child's teacher(s) about the instructional program in the classroom.

.45   18. I make sure to tell my child's teacher(s) when I think things are going well.

.64   21. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's work in class.

.67   22. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's homework.

.71   25. I feel free to contact my child's teacher(s) about my child's behaviour in class.

Scale 7.   Parent values schooling

Cronbach's Alpha: .54.   Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

.41   1. I talk to my child about school events/activities.

.35   4. I encourage my child always to do his/her best work in school.

.38   59. I talk to my child about schoolwork quite a lot.

Scale 8.   Parent perception of school climate

Cronbach's Alpha: .81.   Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

.38   10. The instructional program in our school helps to motivate students.

.55   24. Students are excited about learning in this school.

.46   26. Students in our school have the necessary ability to achieve well in basic skills.

.50   28. The academic emphasis in our school is challenging to students.

.63   30. Students are proud of our school.

.53   32. Our school reflects the values of the community in which it is located.

.53   36. Teachers make schoolwork interesting for students in this school.

.46   45. Our school is an important part of the community.

.51   47. Our school makes visitors feel welcome.

.34   57. My child feels comfortable in class.

Scale 9.   Parent perception of parent efficacy

Cronbach's Alpha: .45   Items with "corrected item-total correlations":

.28   49. I usually feel able to help my child with homework.

.13   51. I wish I could do more to assist my child with school work.

.23   52. I make a strong contribution to how well my child does in school.

.38   54. My child's family has strengths that could be tapped by the school to help my child succeed.

.19   (REVERSED)   60. My child and I find it difficult to work together on schoolwork .

Appendix 2

Parent Survey: Mean Scale Scores and Standard Deviation
(1= Strongly Agree - 5= Strongly Disagree; Q62/52 1-10 lo-hi)

Parents

Measure

	Mean	SD
Question 62 Rating of School (1-10, low to high)	6.27	2.13
Scale 1. Parent perception of student/teacher communication.	2.49	0.79
Scale 2. Parent perception of student/parent communication.	2.12	0.74
Scale 3. Parent perception of teacher/ parent communication (instruction).	3.03	0.84
Scale 4. Parent perception of teacher/ parent communication (general).	2.90	0.75
Scale 5. Parent perception of teacher concern about parent involvement.	2.05	0.61
Scale 6. Parent perception of parent/school communication.	2.16	0.71
Scale 7. Parent values schooling.	1.59	0.53
Scale 8. Parent perception of school climate.	2.33	0.60
Scale 9. Parent perception of parent efficacy.	2.29	0.55

Appendix 3

Correlation Matrix Time 1 (n = 187; * p < .001)

PARENTS

	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	SC 4	SC 5	SC 6	SC 7	SC 8
Q. 62	0.23*		0.04	0.12	0.27*	0.29*	0.19	0.04
SC 1.			0.39*	0.49*	0.52*	0.43*	0.13	0.59*
SC 2.			0.17	0.14	0.05	0.19	0.64*	0.17
SC 3.				0.78*	0.51*	0.51*	0.14	0.50*
SC 4.					0.66*	0.60*	0.15	0.63*
SC 5.						0.54*	0.15	0.66*
SC 6.							0.36*	0.53*
SC 7.								0.16
SC 8.								

Appendix 4

PARENT INTERVIEW

site cl pers no

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

A. Responses tend to be lengthier and more helpful if the respondent feels comfortable. This may require visiting them at home. School may be convenient, but perhaps not a relaxing place.

B. Try to elicit full responses - if the response seems terse, use the PROBES listed with the questions. Your questions **must be short** though, so **only use the probes if needed.**

C. If the respondent begins to repeat himself/herself, try to redirect the response by moving to a probe or to the next question.

INTRODUCTION: (TO BE READ): Our research group (teachers in the district and graduate students from Simon Fraser University) is engaged in a research project regarding the co-production of learning in children - that is the ways in which teachers and parents can work together to help children learn. We are collecting information from teachers, parents, and children about what happens and how people feel about it. Could you please answer the following questions as completely as possible. If you do not understand a question ask me to repeat it.

QUESTION 1: How many children do you have in school? What grade level(s)?

QUESTION 2: As a parent do you feel welcome in your child's school?
PROBES: What causes you to feel this way?

QUESTION 3: As a parent do you feel welcome in your child's classroom?
PROBES: Do the children accept your presence without fussing? Does the teacher greet you by name, when convenient?

QUESTION 4: Please describe the ways in which you are involved with the school your child attends?
PROBES: Do you work as a volunteer sometimes, when convenient? Do you attend meetings? Do you accompany children on field-trips? Do you call or visit the school sometimes?

QUESTION 5: Does the school encourage your involvement?
PROBES: Do you get written information from the school (school-level or classroom level)? Are you often invited to attend meetings? Does the teacher call you about helping?

QUESTION 6: Could you help in the school more than you do? In what ways?.

QUESTION 7: What prevents you from doing more to help your child learn?
PROBES: Do teachers welcome your assistance in classrooms or school? Does your child ask for your help at home? Do you feel comfortable about helping your child with school work? What kind of help do you provide? Do you enjoy this experience? Does your child enjoy this?

QUESTION 8: Do you feel that your child's teacher sees you as a partner/team member in your child's education?
Probes: Could you give some examples of what s/he does that makes you feel (not feel) that way? What could you do to help that you do not now do? Could you describe ways in which you and the teacher work together?

QUESTION 9: Has there ever been a time when you felt excluded from your child's schooling?
Probes: What were the circumstances? Who made you feel that way?

QUESTION 10: Have there been times when you felt that you had to stand up for your child's interests at school?
Probes: Have there been times when you felt you needed to, but did not? What stopped you?

QUESTION 11: Were there times when you felt that the teacher missed an opportunity to gain your support?
Probes: Can you recall specific incidents?

QUESTION 12: When you and your child's teacher meet, what kinds of things are typically discussed?
PROBES: Do you feel comfortable in these meetings?

QUESTION 13: Do you have a sense that your child's teacher respects your child?
PROBES: What does s/he do that makes you feel this way?

QUESTION 14: Have your child's teachers (present/past) helped you to learn things that enabled you to assist your child with his/her school work?
Probes: Could you give some examples?

QUESTION 15: How does your child feel about school?
PROBES: What makes you think that?

QUESTION 16: How far do you expect your child to go in school?
PROBES: Why do you think that? Does your child talk about going on in school?

QUESTION 17: In what ways do you feel your child takes responsibility for his/her own education?
Probes: Could you give some examples? What would you like to see him/her do differently, if anything?

QUESTION 18: What words immediately come to mind when I mention the following: "the relationship between parents and teachers"?
Probes: How do you think your child's teacher would respond to this question?

QUESTION 19: Is there anything I haven't asked you on this topic that you would like to mention?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE YOU HAVE PROVIDED.

Appendix 5
Master Coding Sheet

Interview Codes (Includes students, teachers, parents)

NOVEMBER 28, 1991

Note: // = change of level; / = alternatives within a level. Thus c/t//curr = communication with teacher regarding curriculum;and c/t//disc = communication with teacher regarding discipline. The main heading + 3 columns provides for 4 levels, the maximum considered useful. Generally only the first occurrence of the abbreviations is explained. Assume // between columns even when not shown.

Fourth level coding to indicate whether a parent involvement activity was for the parent's own child is marked in *bold face italics*.

Administrator

A   //Communication w teacher(C-T)

Collaboration

Coll   //With teacher (T)

//Goals(G)/Curr/Prob/Disc

Coll   //With student (S)   //Curr/CC

(classroom conseq.)

Coll   //With administration (A)

Parent Attitude (shows emotional loading)

PA   //Parent Involvement (PI)

PA   //Responsibilities (Resp)   //S/T/P

PA   //School-Parent Comm (SCPC)

PA   //Students

//Achievement/Behaviour(Ach/SB)

PA //Teacher-Parent Comm (TPC)

PA //Teacher Behaviour (TB)

PA //Teaching prof (Prof)

Parent Communication-Parents

PCP //Teacher Attitude   //PI

PCP //Parent Involvement (PI)

Parent Communication-Student

PCS //Behaviour (SB)

PCS //Curriculum

PCS //Events (E)

PCS //Homework (HW)

PCS //School   //Academic/General

(Acad/Gen)

PCS //Social (Soc)

PCS //Transition (Trans)

Parent Communication-Teacher

PCT //Achievement (Ach)

PCT //Interim Report (ImR)

PCT //Interview (Int)

PCT //Obstacle (O)

PCT //Parent Behaviour (PB)

Parent Efficacy

PE

Parent Expectations (shows future orientation)

PEx //Parent-Teacher Communications (PTC)

PEx //Parent-Teacher Relations (PTRel)

PEx //Students

//Achievement/Behaviour

PEx //Teacher Behaviour (TB)

PEx //Teacher-Parent Comm (TPC)

PEx //Transition (T)

Parent Involvement

PI   //Classroom (Cl)   *//own child (oc)*

        //volunteer/message/
          conditional/observation/
          newsletter/academic/
          social/student activity
          (CL/vol/Me/Cond/
          Obs/News/Acad/Soc/SA)

PI   //Discipline (DP)

PI   //Formal Interview (FInt)

PI   //Homework (HW)

PI   //Initiated by   //T/S/P   *//own child (oc)*

PI   //School Level (Sc)

        //AdvComm/E/Vol/Soc   *//own child (oc)*

PI   //Training (Tr)

PI   //Effects (Eff)

Parent Involvement-Obstacle

PIO   //Distance (Dist)

PIO   //Family/Student Activities (F/SAc)

PIO   //Parent Efficacy/Ability (PE/Abil)

PIO   //School

PIO   //Teacher

PIO   //Time/Work (Ti/W)

Parent Perceptions (of events, behaviour)

PP   //Administration (A)

PP   //Curriculum

PP   //Homework

PP   //Parent Involvement

PP   //Parent Efficacy

PP   //Parent-Teacher Relations (PTRel)

PP   //Parent Attitudes

PP   //Responsibility   //S/T/P

PP   //School

PP   //School-Parent Comm (SCPC)

PP   Student Achievement

PP   Student Attitudes   //Trans/PI/RespS

PP   Student Behaviour

PP   Student Expectations (SEx)   //Trans

PP   Student Reaction   //PI

PP   Student-Teacher Relations (St-TRel)

PP   Student Efficacy

PP   Teacher Attitude   //PI/Trans

PP   Teacher Characteristics (TChar)   //Openness/

     Experience/

     Appearance/

     (O/Ex/Appear)

PP   Teacher-Student Comm

PP   Teacher Behaviour   //Acad

PP   Teaching Profession (TProf)

PP   Teacher-Parent Comm

PP   Teacher Reaction (TReact)

PP   Teacher Expectations (TEx)   //Students/PI

PP   Teacher Efficacy

School Communications-Parent

SCCP Messages (Me)

SCCP Newsletters/Volunteer info/Events

     (News/Vol/E)

SCCP Notices (Not)

Student Attitude

SA   Attendance (Atten)

SA   Classroom   //Ability

Grouping(AbG/Curr/PI)

SA   Curriculum

SA   Discipline

SA   Learning Activities (LAC)

SA   Responsibility

SA   School   //Extracurr/Pl

SA   Student Achievement

SA   Student Comm-Parent (SCP)

SA   Teachers

Student Behaviour

SB   Accountability (learning) (Acc)

SB   Learning Activities (LAcT)

SB   Responsibility

Student Communications-Parents

SCP   Conditional/Curriculum/Discipline
      Goals/Homework/Projects/Obstacle
      Cond/Curr/Disc/G/HW/Pro/O

SCP   School   //Social/General
(Soc/Gen)

SCP   Social/Student Expectations/TB

Student Communications-Student

SCS   Curriculum/Goals (Curr/G)

SCS   School   //Curriculum/Social

Student Communications-Teacher

SC-T Obstacle (O)

Student Efficacy

SE   Collaborations-Teacher (CT)

SE   Cooperation with students (Coop/S)

SE   School/Sports/Social

SE   Student Achievement

Student Expectations

SEx   Achievement

SEx   Classroom

SEx   Goals (career)

SEx   Responsibilities   //S/T/P

Student Involvement

SI   School/Sports/Social/Library   SC/Sp/Soc/Libr

Student Perceptions

SP	Administration (A)	
SP	Classroom //Environment/Discipline	
SP	Classroom Consequences	CC
SP	Collaboration	//T/P/S
SP	Curriculum	
SP	Parent Attitude	//CL/T/SC/SEx
SP	Parent Involvement	//CL/SC/HW/E/Vol
SP	Parent Reaction	//CL
SP	Responsibility	//S/T/P
SP	School //Resources/Extracurric (EXC)	
SP	School-Parent Comm	//PI/News
SP	School //Climate/Curriculum	
SP	Student Attitude	//T/LAC/SEx/CL/SC
SP	Student Behaviour	
SP	Student-Parent Comm (S-PC)	
SP	Student Reaction	//PI
SP	Student-Student Comm	//Goals
SP	Teacher	//Curr/E
SP	Teacher Attitude	//DP/PI
SP	Teacher Behaviour	
SP	Teacher Efficacy	
SP	Teacher/Parent Comm	//HW/FINT

Teacher Attitudes

TA   School

TA   Parent Expectations

TA   Responsibility

TA   Student Attitudes

TA   Student Achievement

TA   Teacher/Student/Comm

TA   Parent Involvement

Teacher Behaviour

TB   Goals

TB   Learning Activities

TB   Responsibility   //S

Teacher Characteristics

TC   Strict (Str)

TC   Receptive (R)

Teacher Communication-Administrator

TCA

Teacher Communication-Parents

TCP   Achievement

TCP   Formal Interview   //Ac/Soc

TCP   Formal Report Card (Report)

TCP   Homework

TCP   Homework Book

TCP   Interim

TCP   Message

TCP   Newsletter

TCP   Notices

TCP   Obstacle

TCP   Parent Involvement

TCP   Student Behaviour

TCP   Study Habits (SH)

Teacher Communication-Students

TCS   Parent Involvement

Teacher Communication-Teachers

TCT   Collaboration

Teacher Efficacy

TE

Teacher Expectations

TEx   Parent Involvement

TEx   Responsibility

TEx   Student Achievement

Teacher Perceptions

TP   Administration

TP   Coll   //T/S/P

TP   Parent Expectations

TP   Parent Involvement

TP   Parent Involvement Obstacle

TP   Parent Reactions

TP   Parent-Teacher Relationships

TP   Professional Development

TP   Resources

TP   Responsibility   //S/T/P

TP   School Climate (SCClim)

TP   Student Achievement/S Behaviour

       Student Expectations/S-T Relations

TP   Teacher Attitude   //Goals/Resp/S

TP   T Behaviour   //G/Resp/S

TP   Teaching Prof

TP   Transitions

Teacher Reaction

TR   Problems

TR   Parent Involvement/Initiation

Appendix 6
Parent Ratings and Types of Involvement

High Rating Parents

	Total PI	Type 1	% of total	Type 2	% of total
16228 Hi	14	10	71	4	28*
21211 Hi	8	5	63	3	37*
16222 Hi	12	7	58	5	42*
12211 Hi	19	11	57	8	42*
21201 8H	10	4	40	6	60
23211 Hi	10	4	40	6	60
17226 Hi	13	5	38	8	61
14219 Hi	18	4	21	14	79
23213 HI	2	0	0	2	100

Total incidents of parent involvement for high rating parents:
14+8+12+19+10+10+13+18+2 = **106**

Mean % for parents giving school high ratings:

Type 1   71+63+58+57+40+40+38+21+0/9.00 =   **43.11%**

Type 2   28+37+42+42+60+60+61+79+100/9.00 =   **56.56%**

* (Asterik) indicates those parents who show a pattern of more Type 1 than Type 2 parent involvement. This pattern is more typical of high rating parents than it is of low rating parents.

Low Rating Parents

	Total PI	Type	% of total	Type 2	% of total
14212 8L	19	10	52	9	47
17224 Lo	10	4	40	6	60*
12205 Lo	24	8	33	16	66*
13214 Lo	7	2	28	5	71*
17202 Lo	5	1	20	4	80*
11227 8L	11	2	18	9	81*
23222 Lo	15	2	13	13	86*
25201 Lo	8	1	12	7	87*
24209 8L	8	1	12	7	87*

Total incidents of parent involvement for low rating parents:

19+10+24+7+5+11+15+8+8 = **107**

Mean % for parents giving school low ratings

Type 1   52+40+33+28+20+18+13+12+12/9.00 =   **25.33%**

Type 2   47+60+66+71+80+81+86+87+87/9.00 =   **73.89%**

* (Asterik) indicates those parents who show a pattern of more Type 2 than Type 1 parent involvement. This pattern is typical of low rating parents.

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