BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH MINORITY-LANGUAGE PARENTS

Toronto Teachers’ Experiences in Building Effective Partnerships with Minority-Language Parents

By

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Abstract

There has been a growing number of immigrant and refugee families settling in Toronto, and an extensive amount of literature strongly suggesting that parental involvement is an integral component of the education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Thus, it is important for educators to understand how to effectively create culturally and linguistically sensitive partnerships with minority-language immigrant parents. By interviewing two Toronto educators, this qualitative study provides an understanding of teachers’ positive experiences collaborating with minority-language parents in Toronto schools. The findings from the interviews support and expand those of previous studies, and promote an increased awareness of the promising practices and strategies in building partnerships with minority-language families within Toronto communities. While this study focuses on the experiences of two Toronto educators, it also provides useful insights and recommendations for teachers and administrators who work at schools with linguistically diverse populations.

Keywords: Parent-teacher partnerships, minority-language parents, teacher experiences
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context

There is an extensive amount of literature discussing the significant benefits of family-school partnerships, strongly suggesting that parent involvement is an integral component of the education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Not only does effective parent involvement correlate with greater student academic and social success in school (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991), it also results in positive outcomes for the parents, teachers and schools (Epstein, 2001). The benefits associated with parent involvement occur regardless of the economic, ethnic, or cultural background of the family (Diaz Soto, 1997; Domina, 2005; Griffith, 1996). Despite these benefits, there are challenges that negatively influence parent involvement in the school system, especially for minority-language parents. In fact, minority-language parents report facing more limiting factors than their native-born, English speaking parents (Turney & Kao, 2009). In order to understand how to better support parents’ school engagement, it is critical to fully understand the challenges and benefits that parents and teachers face.

1.1 Research Problem

There are a growing number of immigrant and refugee families settling in the Toronto area (Statistics Canada, 2008), resulting in a high level of cultural and linguistic diversity within the school systems. With the high levels of diversity within the classroom, educators need to effectively adopt culturally and linguistically sensitive partnerships with minority-language parents. There is a significant amount of research (Christianakis, 2011; Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Leithwood, 2009; Ramirez, 2000; Turney & Kao, 2009) describing the factors that prevent successful parent involvement, especially for these minority-language parents (Turney & Kao, 2009). They report facing substantially more challenges than do native-born English speaking
parents as they try to become involved in the education system, and as a result of the reported barriers they are found to be much less likely to become involved in the education system (Turney, & Kao, 2009). With significant positive outcomes associated with increased parent involvement, it is essential for teachers to understand how to effectively engage linguistically diverse families in their children’s education. While a vast amount of literature (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Georgis, Gokiert, Ford, & Ali, 2014; Leithwood, 2009; Pena, 2000; Turney & Kao, 2009) focuses on the challenges in creating parent-school partnerships with minority-language parents, this study explored the positive experiences of Toronto educators in creating effective partnerships with these parents.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to provide a deeper understanding of the positive experiences of Toronto school teachers working with linguistically diverse families. This study focused on the experiences of Toronto educators in fostering effective and collaborative parent-school partnerships with minority-language parents. Additionally, it explored teachers’ perceived benefits as well as the challenges they need to overcome in forming parental partnerships. Through investigating their experiences with successful parent involvement, I hope to shed new light on the promising practices and strategies of teachers in effectively engaging families of diverse linguistic background. Furthermore, in order to enhance educational practice of teachers to fully support the child and foster their successes, I aimed to highlight strategies to strengthen communication between educators and minority-language families.
1.3 Research Questions

This qualitative research study was guided by one main question and supported by three sub-questions, which will help promote deeper inquiry and investigation. The main question for the study was: What are teachers’ experiences with building effective and collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse families to promote student learning and engagement? The sub-questions were: What strategies are school teachers using to build effective and collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse families?; What are the benefits and challenges of teachers in establishing positive parent-teacher partnerships?; and How do teachers create a safe and inclusive environment for parents to feel welcome in their classroom?

1.4 Background of the Researcher

Through spending a significant amount of time travelling to countries where the population knows very little English, and working with children and families of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, I have become inspired to deepen my understanding of the unique strengths and difficulties facing families of different cultures. My experiences have helped me recognize my own privilege as an Anglo-Saxon Christian, and have made me passionate about working with and empowering individuals and families who are underserved.

Firstly, while traveling in rural China, my inability to speak the local languages caused me moments of great frustration while trying to complete even the simplest tasks that would take me little effort in Canada. In the end, however, I always found someone that would take the time to try and understand me. Spending time away from home in a country where everything was new, I appreciated the individuals who were patient with me and took the extra time to make sure I felt understood and heard. Upon reflection, I can now only begin to understand how a child and family, new to Canada, may feel in a classroom where the language of instruction is not their
own. Many families in Toronto are new to Canada and I feel that it is necessary for the education system to understand how to effectively support these families.

In addition to my travel experiences, I have spent several years working with children and families who were forced to leave their country and move to Toronto in order to receive medical treatment. Not surprisingly, this was a very stressful time for families who had to move to a new country where the language and culture was unknown. By working with these families, I learned the importance of being patient and of building meaningful relationships with the children and families in order to help their children feel safe to take risks and grow.

My experiences and interactions have led me to understand the importance of following a multicultural education theory, in which all children can receive education in equitable conditions. I am committed to achieving equity in education, combating oppressive practices, and emphasizing the participation of minority parents. I believe it is necessary to clearly understand the cultural context of the families and become aware of the family needs and hesitations. In this study, I used a multiculturalism framework to examine the parent-school partnerships of minority-language parents within Toronto schools.

1.5 Overview of the Study

The next chapter provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with parent-school partnerships, especially when working with diverse family populations. Following the literature review, I discuss the detailed methodology and procedures that are used in this study, including information about the sample participants and data collection instruments. The findings are presented in chapter four, followed by a list of implications, recommendations, and concluding comments in chapter five.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction to the Chapter

The growing diversity of the student population in Toronto schools and the resulting increase in English Language Learners in the classroom is forcing schools to establish culturally sensitive communication practices between school personnel and families. The purpose of this research study was to understand the experiences of Toronto school teachers working with minority-language, foreign-born families, who have recently immigrated to Canada. I explored the challenges in and effective strategies for engaging linguistically diverse, foreign-born families in their child’s education in Toronto schools.

The following chapter provides important background information on this topic, including definitions, details about the demographics of Toronto, as well as a review of the research that already exists. It provides a better understanding of the significant benefits for students, parents, and schools that are associated with parent-school partnerships, as well as the barriers that may negatively influence parent involvement in schools. Through an analysis of recent research, the reader will gain a better understanding of the importance of parent-school partnerships in children’s learning, especially when working with the diverse family populations of Toronto.

2.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the terms parent and family were used interchangeably as synonyms. Recognizing that for many children, their grandparents, older siblings, aunts and uncles, or close friends may play an important parental role, I did not distinguish between a child’s parent or extended family. Therefore, within this study, the two terms both referred to the person or people who play an important guardian role, who are important to the student, and
should be included in the school community. Furthermore, the terms linguistically diverse and minority-language referred to a language that is not one of Canada’s official languages, English or French, and mother tongue is the first language a person learns at home and still understands at the time of the study (Statistics Canada, 2012b). Additionally, references to Toronto referred to the metropolitan area of Toronto, as defined by the Census report (Statistics Canada, 2012a). Lastly, a recent immigrant referred to an individual who has arrived in Canada within 10 years at the time of the study (Statistics Canada, 2008).

2.2 Demographics of Toronto, Canada

In recent decades, Canada has admitted more than 225,000 immigrants each year (Statistics Canada, 2008), and this year the Canadian Government vows to accept an additional 35,000 to 50,000 refugees from Syria (Bateman, 2015). The level of diversity within the school system will continue to increase as more immigrant and refugee families settle in Toronto. Within Canada, Toronto is the metropolitan area with the largest population of foreign-born individuals, and in 2011, 75.8% of Toronto’s population consisted of people who were foreign-born or had at least 1 parent who was born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013a). Not only does Toronto have the largest number of immigrants, it also has the largest percentage of recent immigrants, as 41% of all recent immigrants to Canada move to Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2008). As a result of the increasing number of immigrants in Canada, the number of individuals who report having a mother tongue other than English or French is growing, making Canada a multilingual country. In addition to English and French, the National Household Survey (Statistics Canada, 2012b) estimated that Canada had more than 200 mother tongue languages, and almost half of Toronto’s population reported having a non-official mother tongue. Among the non-official mother tongue languages, Chinese languages are the most common
(Statistics Canada, 2013b). With the increasing population of immigrant and refugee families settling in Toronto, educators in Toronto schools need to effectively create culturally and linguistically sensitive partnerships with minority-language, foreign-born parents. Instituting such partnerships will improve the educational experiences for children, parents, and teachers within the school community.

2.3 Benefits of Family-School Collaboration

There is a vast amount of literature discussing the benefits of family-school partnerships, strongly suggesting the important role parents play in the education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Successful family-school partnerships have many positive benefits for the students, parents, and schools (Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). The following sections provide more detail on the benefits associated with parent and family involvement for each stakeholder involved.

2.3.1 Student advantages

Decades of research on parent involvement have produced consistent results: when parents get involved in their children’s education, children have greater academic and social success (Araujo, 2009; Epstein, 2001; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Specifically, effective parent involvement correlates with greater student achievement (Darch, Yu, & Shippen, 2004; Diaz Soto, 1997; Domina, 2005; Epstein, 2001; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Sheldon, 2007). It also positively affects the attitudes and behaviours of students, increasing their motivation and reducing the amount of destructive classroom behaviours they present (Darch et al., 2004; Domina, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Sheldon, 2007). Lastly, successful parent involvement enhances the emotional development of students (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).
It is important to note that parent involvement in a child’s education is a major factor in determining success in school, regardless of the economic, ethnic, or cultural background of the family (Diaz Soto, 1997; Domina, 2005; Griffith, 1996). Griffith (1996) found that it is consistently correlated with higher student test performance, regardless of varying levels of school resources or the socioeconomic, racial and ethnic composition of the student populations. However, Domina (2005) found that the degree of positive impact it has on cognitive and behavioral benefits for the student varies according to the family’s socio-economic background. For instance, involving parents belonging to lower socio-economic populations resulted in more significant benefits for students than the involvement of more affluent parents (Domina, 2005). Even low levels of parental involvement from low-income families resulted in large improvements in educational achievement (Domina, 2005). Therefore, it is important for teachers to collaborate with parents of all cultural, linguistic or economic backgrounds, to help promote student success.

2.3.2 Parent advantages

In addition to the significant benefits for students, there are many positive outcomes for parents that come from their increased involvement at school, especially for minority-language, foreign-born parents. Through parent involvement, immigrant parents begin to better understand the educational system (Bernhard, Freire, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Villanueva, 1998) and school policies (Darch et al., 2004), transforming their child’s school into a more familiar, safe, and comfortable environment. With increased knowledge and awareness of the school system, they are more effective in supporting their children’s educational processes (Bernhard et al., 1998), therefore resulting in increased positive outcomes for their child. School parent groups have been found to empower linguistically diverse parents, by organizing them and helping them voice
their collective opinions and concerns in order to advocate for their children (Diaz Soto, 1997; Domina, 2005; Turney & Kao, 2009). Through regular parent engagement, immigrant parents begin to feel like their views and voices have validity, which results in an increased sense of efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). In addition, Epstein (1987) found that when parents are more involved in school, teachers begin to view parents as more effective and useful, which results in a more positive relationship between the teacher and families. Therefore, through culturally sensitive programs, parental involvement can enhance parents’ self-esteem and feelings of efficacy, benefitting their children and the school as well.

2.3.3 School advantages

Parental involvement generates many positive benefits for schools as well. Schools that promote school-wide parent-teacher collaborations have been found to outperform schools with little parent involvement (Epstein, 1987; Griffith, 1996; Sheldon, 2007). For example, elementary schools that develop strategies to connect with families have higher student attendance, which has been found to result in better student performance on standardized achievement tests (Sheldon, 2007). Furthermore, parents who are involved in school activities become more supportive of teachers and school policies (Darch et al., 2004). Researchers (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992) also demonstrated a positive relationship between parent involvement and teacher efficacy. When teachers implement a parent-involvement program, the parents recognize their efforts and provide more positive feedback on the value and impact of their teaching (Epstein, 1987, 2001), helping the teacher feel more confident about their teaching skill and practice (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

The listed benefits for students, families and schools suggest the high importance of schools working towards creating stronger parent engagement programs; however, many school
communities have difficulty forging successful collaborative partnerships with parents. The following sections discuss the potential factors that limit family-school partnerships.

2.4 Factors Influencing Family-School Involvement

There is a significant amount of literature describing factors that negatively influence involvement. The factors that have been found to constrain parental participation in schools include the school personnel’s negative attitudes toward parents, lack of sufficient teacher training, cultural and linguistic differences, and the school’s narrow perception of parental involvement (Christianakis, 2011; Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Leithwood, 2009; Ramirez, 2000).

2.4.1 School personnel’s negative attitude toward parents

Most teachers recognize the value parent involvement brings to the promotion of student academic and emotional success (Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Pena, 2000); however, some teachers do not value parents, may judge them negatively (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Pena, 2000), and may be reluctant to learn ways to create school-home partnerships (Ferrara, 2009; Ramirez, 2000). Furthermore, some teachers are heavily burdened with many teaching duties, and feel that they do not have time to work with parents (Pena, 2000; Ramirez, 2000).

The teacher’s lack of interest and negative attitudes toward parent involvement can function as barriers to parent participation (Bernhard et al., 1998; Christianakis, 2011), especially for minority-language parents (Pena, 2000). For instance, various researchers (Georgis, Gokiert, Ford, & Ali, 2004; Pena, 2000) found that the participation of minority-language parents is greatly impacted by their perception of the school personnel’s attitudes and feelings towards them. When parents feel they are truly welcome in the schooling process, their school engagement increases. Similarly, as parents’ personal feelings toward school staff increases, their engagement increases (Pena, 2000). Therefore, the actions and comments of school personnel
greatly impact the level of parent involvement. In conclusion, teachers must adopt positive attitudes and perceptions of parents, and create a supportive school environment where parents feel valued and welcome, to ultimately increase parent-school partnerships (Araujo, 2009; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Pena, 2000).

2.4.2 Cultural and linguistic diversity

Minority-language, foreign-born parents report facing substantially more challenges as they try to become informed and involved in their child’s school, compared to native-born English speaking parents (Turney & Kao, 2009). The barriers that limit these parents’ communication and participation in elementary schools include their lack of English language proficiency (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Turney & Kao, 2009), their unfamiliarity with the school system (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Leithwood, 2009), and the differences between their cultural norms and the school’s cultural norms (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Pena, 2000). As a result of these barriers, linguistically diverse families were found to be much less likely to become involved in the education system (Turney & Kao, 2009).

The difference in languages between teachers and parents make minority-language parents feel disempowered and that their voices are unheard (Bernhard et al., 1998; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Pena, 2000). According to Turney and Kao (2009), the longer the immigrant parents lived in the country, the more apt they are to become involved in their child’s education, because their perceived English language ability increased. Turney and Kao (2009) also compared the level of involvement and barriers affecting families of varying ethnicities, and found that some race and ethnicities perceived greater barriers to involvement than others. Foreign-born Asians were 2.8 times more likely than native-born whites to report
not feeling welcome at their child’s school, and they were 9.7 times more likely than native-born whites to report language as a barrier to this (Turney & Kao, 2009). Therefore, with nearly half of Toronto’s population speaking a non-official mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2012b), it is important for Toronto school teachers to understand the degree of perceived barriers these families face within the school system.

Another reason that immigrant parents have lower school engagement is because of their reported insecurity of the unknown (Araujo, 2009; Bernhard et al., 1998; Leithwood, 2009; Pena, 2000). Having attended school outside of Canada, these parents are unfamiliar with the school, with school routines, and with the expectations schools have of them. Immigrant parents also do not understand how and when to communicate with school personnel (Bernhard et al., 1998). With the foreign-born parents’ lack of knowledge and experience with the Canadian school system, teachers should spend more time ensuring they are comfortable with the school processes.

Lastly, families and teachers bring different cultural beliefs and expectations to the school experience (Bernhard et al., 1998; Diaz Soto, 1997), and it is important to note that some cultures do not require or encourage parent participation in school issues (Bernhard et al., 1998; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). As a result, immigrant parents may believe that they are being helpful by maintaining a respectful distance from the education system, but teachers can misinterpret this as a lack of concern and involvement (Araujo, 2009; Christianakis, 2011).

Clearly, understanding the cultural context of families and being aware of family needs and hesitations is one of the most important aspects of working with a diverse immigrant population (Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Pena, 2000). Instead of viewing students and parents through their personal cultural values, teachers should strive to develop an
understanding of students’ family cultures and home environments, and reduce the language and logistical barriers the parents face, in order to better support their school engagement (Bernhard et al., 1998; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Turney & Kao, 2009; Waanders, Mendez, & Downey, 2007).

2.4.3 Lack of training

Another common theme associated with the challenges of parent involvement is the teachers’ lack of training (Epstein, 1987, 2001; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 2001; Pena, 2000). Researchers (Greenwood & Hickman, 2001; Pena, 2000) have found that teachers do not feel secure enough in their teaching skills and partnership experience to have parents in their classroom. Chavkin and Williams (1988) surveyed 881 teachers, and 86% of teachers expressed their need for training. Additionally, the majority of surveyed teacher educators (82%), teachers (73%) and administrators (83%) felt that an undergraduate course should focus on parent involvement. Even after several years, research conducted by Epstein (2001) and Ferrara and Ferrara (2005), still found that teachers reported the need to have more training in parent communication and parent involvement strategies. In spite of this expressed need, little attention has been paid to the need to prepare teachers to work with parents and families (Epstein, 2001; Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Pena, 2000), and teacher-parent partnerships tend to be based on trial and error as opposed to an organized strategy that meets student needs (Epstein, 2001).

To help teachers feel more prepared, teacher preparation courses need to be adjusted to help teachers learn the skills needed to work with parents from different cultural backgrounds (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Guo, 2009). Such a course should help teachers become open to working with parents and fostering parent involvement beyond the traditional educentric views
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(Dunlap & Alva, 1999). I agree with the idea that teachers should undergo classroom and community experiences so they are better equipped to effectively communicate with culturally diverse parents and, to understand the value of the school-parent relationship (Decastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Dunlap & Alva, 1999). With increased training, teachers will become more confident in their skills, and with higher self-efficacy they are more likely to reach out to parents and learn ways to involve them in their child’s education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

2.4.4 Narrow vision of parental involvement

The last significant barrier that prevents effective parent involvement has been credited to school environments that do not value the view and participation of parents beyond the traditional roles of parent support in schools (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). Traditionally, schools design parent involvement programs to meet school needs, focusing on specific ways that parents and families can support their efforts in school, rather than what the school can do to support families (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Georgis et al., 2014). Teachers favor parents who reinforce the school curriculum and disciplinary policies at home (Christianakis, 2011). Specifically, for low-income and minority families, involving parents has been narrowly viewed as a way to help parents develop a knowledge base or set of skills to assist with their children’s academic and social success in school (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Dunlap & Alva, 1999). Lastly, teachers feel it is the responsibility of parents to become involved, rather than the duty of the teacher to reach out to the family and encourage parent involvement; however, this is difficult if the parents are unfamiliar with the school system, with the language, and the role the teacher expects from them (Ramirez, 2000).

In contrast to the traditional educentric view of parental involvement, many immigrant parents hold different underlying assumptions about what constitutes family involvement (Arias
& Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Christianakis, 2011; Ferrara, 2009; Leithwood, 2009). Many minority-language immigrant parents perceive their role in their child’s education as providing nurturing, teaching values, and instilling good behaviors (Araujo, 2009; Arias & Morillo-Campbell 2008), and may not actively participate in the school environment. When minority-language parents do not follow traditional parental involvement, and contact the teacher and school to begin a partnership, the teacher feels the parents are not interested in their child’s education (Christianakis, 2011).

Parents deserve a primary role in determining the nature of their participation, and in establishing collaboratively how they and the teachers divide the responsibilities in educating their child (Bernhard et al., 1998). Georgis et al. (2014) found that parent engagement with refugee families increased when families had an opportunity to help define parent engagement. Staff should understand and engage in non-traditional approaches to parental involvement to better support cultural and linguistically diverse families (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Georgis et al., 2014; Waanders et al., 2007), and ensure that all forms of involvement are recognized as a valuable contribution to their child’s education.

2.5 Conclusion to the Chapter

In conclusion, given the growing number of immigrant and refugee families in Toronto, and the numerous positive outcomes associated with parent engagement, it is important for Toronto educators to adopt parent involvement strategies that positively reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of their classrooms and respect the backgrounds of students and parents. However, there is minimal research that focuses specifically on the positive experiences and strategies of Toronto educators. This study herein attempted to fill the gap in literature, and shed new light on the promising practices of Toronto educators in engaging families of diverse
linguistic background. In order to determine what the best strategies are, this study used the existing research as a platform to further examine the ways in which Toronto teachers engage minority-language parents. I explored varying methods in which Toronto teachers ensured families, with diverse backgrounds, feel more comfortable becoming involved in the school and their child’s education.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction to the Chapter

The purpose of this research study was to provide a deeper understanding of the positive experiences of Toronto school teachers working with linguistically diverse families to optimize parent involvement programs and promote student learning and engagement. This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology, starting with the general approach and procedures, followed by a description of the data collection and analysis processes. Additionally, the participants are introduced, along with the specific recruitment protocol, and it closes with a discussion of ethical considerations and methodological limitations and strengths that are relevant to the study.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This study used a qualitative research approach to examine the individual experiences and perceptions of Toronto educators in implementing successful parent engagement programs. Considering the aim of qualitative research was to provide an in-depth description and understanding of human experience (Lichtman, 2006), it seemed accurate to adopt this protocol to study the human experiences of school teachers in building effective parent-school partnerships. Following a qualitative approach allowed for a more detailed description of the opinions and experiences of the teachers, which Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2013) suggest would have been difficult to obtain through a more quantitatively oriented method.

More specifically, this study included a detailed literature review to gain context of the value and challenges in parent-school partnerships, especially when working with a culturally and linguistically diverse population. In addition to studying prior research, I conducted semi-structured interviews. I followed the recommendations of Creswell (2013) and Jackson II,
Drummond, and Camara (2007) and spoke with, and heard the personal stories of teachers, which ultimately lead to a greater understanding of their lived experiences. The interview process will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection used in this study was the semi-structured interview protocol. Semi-structured interviews are highly preferred and are used extensively to generate data from individuals in a qualitative research study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Guest et al., 2013).

I conducted individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with two Toronto teachers. Each interview was scheduled at the convenience of the participant and was approximately forty-five to sixty minutes in duration. Throughout the interview, each participant answered a series of structured open-ended questions, in which they received in advance. Following Gall et al.’s (2003) guidelines, I asked follow up questions, after each structured question, to clarify and obtain additional information. This approach allowed for reasonably standard data to be gathered from the interviews, and allowed for the exploration of new concepts, ideas or issues by each participant (Gall et al., 2003).

The interviews began with a general discussion of the school context and the teacher’s experience level, and then the teacher responded to a set of questions designed to measure their thoughts on the following: experience with minority-language parents, views on parent-involvement, perceived benefits and challenges, teacher strategies, and recommendations. With consent from the teachers, the in-depth conversations from the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The list of interview questions is available in Appendix B.
3.3 Participants

Following the recommendations of Patton (1990), this qualitative inquiry included a small sample size of two teachers who were both selected purposefully. The subsequent sections provide more detail on the sampling criteria and the specific recruitment protocol. Furthermore, the teacher participants are introduced.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

In following the recommendations of Gall et al. (2003), I purposely chose educators who could provide in-depth insights into the experiences of fostering effective partnerships with linguistically diverse parents. To ensure the teachers were information-rich with respect to the purpose of the study (Marshall, 1996), they had to meet the following sampling criteria.

Given the aim of the study was to understand the experiences of Toronto educators in building effective partnerships with minority-language parents, the participants needed to have experience working with these parents, and have at least five years of teaching experience at a Toronto school. I assumed teachers with more years teaching experience would have a greater wealth of knowledge and experiences to share. Additionally, the schools in which they taught needed to consist of a linguistically diverse student population. Finally, it was necessary for the participants to be open, and eager to participate. The following section discusses the strategies I used to purposely select the teacher participants.

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

I used two different sampling techniques to find the participants for the study. The first technique I used was the snowball protocol. This sampling strategy involved asking well-situated people to recommend individuals to study. As the process continued, I gained an increasing number of recommended individuals who could be included in the sample population (Gall et al.,
2003; Patton, 1990). In addition to the snowball technique, I used the convenience sampling protocol, which allowed me to use my professional network of teacher candidates, faculty and associate teachers to help select my participants (Gall et al., 2003).

By using the snowball and convenience sampling approach, I was able to create a list of suitable teachers that met my sampling criteria. When contacting the teachers, I provided them with a brief description of the research study and my contact information, so they could contact me if they were interested in participating in the study.

3.3.3 Participant biographies

Adhering to the sampling criteria, the two teacher participants both had over five years of experience teaching at Toronto schools, where the majority of the families within the communities reported having an unofficial mother tongue. Both of the participants were native-born, English speaking teachers, and reported they were not proficient in any other languages. To preserve anonymity, I refer to the participants using pseudonyms.

The first participant, Jane, was an elementary school teacher with eight years of experience teaching all grades ranging from kindergarten to grade eight. The second participant, Maxwell, was a secondary school teacher, with over seventeen years of classroom experience. Maxwell had experience teaching English as a foreign language abroad, as well as English as a second language to secondary students within the Toronto area.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data for this study was analyzed inductively and patterns were discovered through the process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Following the recommendations of Creswell (2013) and Kvale’s (2007) instructions, after the transcribing the audio-recordings, I organized the initial data from the interviews for analysis. I followed Saldaña’s (2009) recommendations to
compile the data into groups of information based on significant statements, expressions, or ideas that were common among research participants. Ultimately, with great rigor and attention to detail, the data was reduced into five meaningful themes through a process of coding and categorizing.

In addition to making note of the data that was explicitly stated, it was important to notice and analyze the implicit data. Tracy (2010) mentioned that noticing and analyzing the implicit data was important to fully understanding the interaction and the experiences; therefore, I explored issues that were assumed or implicit. The following section discusses the ethical guidelines that were used in data collection and analysis to ensure successful ethical practice.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

In addition to following the ethical protocol designated for the Master of Teaching Research Project (MTRP) at the University of Toronto, this study practiced additional ethical practices, which will be discussed in this section. I followed Gall et al.’s (2003) ethical recommendations and had each participant read and sign an informed consent letter (Appendix A) prior to their interview. The consent letter disclosed detailed information about the study, including: the nature and purpose of the study, the ethical implications, the specific expectations, and the associated risk of participating. As per Tracy (2010) and Creswell’s (2013) suggestions, participants were notified that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study. Additionally, I adapted several safety measures to ensure confidentiality of the research data. The safety measures included, ensuring no unauthorized personnel would view the research data, and the privacy of individuals within the study were protected (Gall et al., 2003). I stored the interview data on my password-protected computer, and ensured the audio recording would be destroyed after the study was presented and/or published.
The last safety measure ensured the participant identities remained confidential and any identifying indicators related to their school community were excluded. Furthermore, I followed the advice of Tracy (2010), and ensured participants felt connected to the research process by maintaining ongoing communication and allowing them the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure their intended meaning was captured. The next section of this chapter identifies the limitations and strengths associated to the study’s methodology.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

In following the MTRP guidelines, I could collect data through conducting semi-structured interviews with two to four teachers. These methodological guidelines presented various limitations and strengths for the study. I think it would have been beneficial to gain insight into the perspectives of minority-language parents in Toronto, in addition to the teachers. Having the parents articulate their experiences could have provided a complete illustration of positive parent-school partnerships, from both perspectives. Additionally, by using an interview method, it was difficult to completely standardize the interview situation to avoid having the participants’ answers be influenced, in some degree, by me (Gall et al., 2003).

Despite these limitations, there was considerable value within the research approach and methods provided by the MTRP guidelines. Having a study with a small sample size, allowed me to gain very in-depth understandings of the experiences of the Toronto educators. I would not have been able to provide such an in-depth comprehension of the successes of Toronto teachers, if I had used a larger and more generalizable sample population. Additionally, the adaptability of the semi-structured interview protocol, allowed me to structure the interviews to ensure the questions focused on the research questions, but also permitted flexibility. When needed, I could ask additional questions to obtain more information or clarify a vague statement. Lastly, by
interviewing teachers directly, it allowed them an opportunity to articulate how they conceptualize particular topics in theory and in practice.

3.7 Conclusion to the Chapter

In this chapter I explained the research methodology that was used to collect the data. Through the use of semi-structured interviews with two purposefully selected teachers, I was able to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Toronto educators in effectively fostering parent-school partnerships with minority-language parents. Chapter four presents the findings that emerged from the data that was collected through the interviews.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter reports and discusses the overall findings obtained from the data from the semi-structured interviews with two Toronto educators, Jane and Maxwell. The data was examined using a multiculturalism framework, and guided by the main research question: what are the experiences of educators in building effective and collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse families to promote student learning and engagement? The analysis and interpretation of the data revealed common patterns, which helped to identify emergent themes.

The findings are organized into five major themes: benefits of effective parent-teacher collaboration; ways to create a welcoming environment for parents; effective communication strategies to reduce language barriers; factors contributing to teacher’s high levels of self-confidence in parent engagement; and teacher mindsets that promote successful collaboration. Each of these five themes is subsequently divided into sub-themes to further support the organization of the study. Each section elaborates on the overall theme identified, integrates and evaluates the participant voices, and makes connections with prior research by identifying divergences and convergences. I conclude this chapter by briefly reviewing and summarising the findings, before giving an overview of the implications of the research in advance of chapter five.

4.1 Benefits of Effective Parent-Teacher Collaboration

The teacher participants unanimously recognized the significant value of parent involvement, suggesting benefits for all stakeholders involved. The findings suggest that parent-teacher collaboration is “key” and that parents are valuable members of the “team.” Similar to the teachers’ responses, researchers (Dunlap & Alva, 1999; Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et
al., 1992) also suggested benefits for the teacher, parent, and student, with increased parent involvement. The following sections provide more detail on the benefits of family-school partnerships for each stakeholder, presented through the lens of the teacher participants and the literature.

4.1.1 Teacher advantages

Both teacher participants identified value in collaborating and learning from the parents. It is important to note that it appears that these participants found value in collaborating with all parents in their classroom, not only minority-language parents. Therefore, the following teacher advantages do not exclusively address the benefits associated with family-school partnerships with linguistically diverse families.

Firstly, with an understanding that parents “know their child best,” the teachers felt it was necessary to include parents in the learning process. They both emphasized the benefit of having parents as a resource, helping them better understand the academic and social needs of their students. As Maxwell, one of the participants, suggested, parents are able to provide a “different perspective about their child,” and may offer insight on “specific triggers” and “effective strategies” that will help her, as the teacher, better support the child in the classroom. Similar to Maxwell’s experiences, Jane found the “feedback from the parents really powerful, in terms of [her] teaching and working with that child.” Therefore, by effectively collaborating with parents, the teachers felt they gained valuable information about their students. To them, parent involvement positively impacted their professional practice by improving their teaching strategies and skills within the classroom. However, this perspective differs from past research (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Christianakis, 2011; Lopez, 2001), which show a more traditional vision of parent involvement. Instead of viewing parents as experts who can provide
useful information and feedback to support teacher development, research has found that many teachers value parents who learn and develop the knowledge base and skill set to reinforce school-like activities at home (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Christianakis, 2011; Lopez, 2001).

In addition to gaining valuable insight, from parents, about their students, both teacher participants treasured the parent-teacher relationships that were formed through parent involvement initiatives. Jane felt that building strong relationships with her students’ families was “fulfilling,” and ultimately “made [her] teaching more meaningful.” The teacher participants both found that the ability to build a positive rapport and personal connection with the families, significantly impacted their teaching practice, by improving their teaching morale and creating a stronger sense of community. In alignment with the teachers’ responses within the study, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) also suggested a positive relationship between parental involvement and improved teacher satisfaction.

4.1.2 Student advantages

The teachers in this study also suggested that effective minority-language immigrant parent involvement benefits the student, especially the culturally and linguistically diverse student. Their responses emphasized the idea that involvement of linguistically diverse, immigrant parents helped to validate the individual identities of their minority-language students.

To begin, both teachers found that the teaching staff within Toronto schools do not accurately reflect the significantly diverse student and family populations in which they serve. With most of the teachers being white, native-born, English speaking individuals, like themselves, they believed it was difficult for their students to actively see their identities reflected within the school environment. Both teachers recognized the value in having parents
from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds spend time within the school to help students, as Maxwell mentioned, “see someone who looks like them, sounds like them, and shares the same values as them.” She also believed that, through initiatives to engage these parents within the school and classroom, “[created] a space that says [to the student], please be who you are in my classroom, whatever that identity is.” Therefore, the teachers felt that providing opportunities for minority-language parents to participate in the learning process helped contribute to a student’s positive sense of cultural and linguistic identity.

Additionally, the teacher participants recognized that effective parent-teacher collaborations helped connect and build congruence between the student’s home and school lives. Maxwell identified value in having minority-language parents involved in the school community, to help reinforce the idea, in their child’s mind, that school and home are interconnected and symbiotic, which is similar to the teacher responses within Ferrara and Ferrara’s (2005) study. Therefore, as shown in the findings and the literature, effective parent involvement with linguistically diverse parents is believed to help reinforce a students’ sense of cultural and linguistic identity, and enables them to effectively navigate and connect their school and home identities.

In contrast to the student advantages suggested within the data, past researchers emphasized the positive correlation between effective parent-involvement and greater student achievement (Darch et al., 2004; Diaz Soto, 1997; Domina, 2005; Epstein, 2001; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Sheldon, 2007), positive behaviours of students in the classroom and increased motivation (Darch et al., 2004; Domina, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Sheldon, 2007). There seems to be minimal research highlighting the positive relationship between minority-language parent involvement and a
student’s understanding of their identity. With the high levels of diversity within Toronto classrooms, I feel further research is required to gain a deeper understanding of the advantages of parent-teacher collaboration, with respect to identity of minority-language students.

4.1.3 Parent advantages

In addition to positively impacting students and teachers, both of the teachers within this study suggested positive outcomes for the parents, as well. From their perspective, they felt that by having immigrant parents volunteer in the school and classroom helped them feel needed and useful within their child’s education, and as an active member of society. Maxwell found that many immigrant parents had difficulty finding employment within their field, so she felt that these parents “loved being able to come in and [feel] like their skills were being utilized.” Moreover, Jane felt that by actively participating in school and classroom activities, immigrant “parents would be able to see” and become more familiar with the kinds of schooling their child is experiencing. Therefore, as minority-language immigrant parents become actively involved in their child’s school and more knowledgeable about the Ontario school system, they develop a greater sense of self-competence. These findings are echoed by Dunlap and Alva (1999), suggesting that successful collaboration with parents should include opportunities for parents to recognize their skills, knowledge and expand their abilities. Further, past researchers (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992) reported a positive correlation between parental involvement in the classroom and the parents’ sense of self-competence. The next theme that emerged is ways to create a welcoming environment for parents, which the following section provides insight from the data and literature.
4.2 Ways to Create a Welcoming Environment for Parents

The teachers’ responses indicated a strong correlation between the parents’ sense of belonging and their level of involvement. From their own teaching experiences, the teachers understood the importance in promoting a supportive school environment where parents feel valued and welcome in order to promote effective school partnerships; these same recommendations are found within the literature (Araujo, 2009; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Pena, 2000). The following sections highlight various strategies and recommendations, in which the teachers believed helped promote a supportive school environment for families to feel welcome. The suggested practices include the need for schools to acknowledge the value of diverse languages, to actively invite parents to join in the school, and to integrate the families’ culture into the school community.

4.2.1 Acknowledge the value of diverse languages

The teacher responses indicated the need for schools to show parents that their mother tongue languages are truly valued within the school community. They felt, by ensuring each different language is part of the school culture, parents would feel like they belonged. In fact, Jane continuously suggested the need for a “mind shift” to occur within the school systems; shifting from simply “honouring the families’ native languages,” to really “celebrating and using the diverse languages” within the community. In agreement with the teachers’ responses, Araujo (2009) also believed it is important for school personnel to help parents recognize the value in their native language.

The teachers suggested various strategies in which they used in their practices to ultimately celebrate the diverse languages in their communities. In both interviews, the teachers reported a need for school and classroom signs to be in multiple languages. They suggested
having students and parents help to translate the signs, because this will help show the parents that their mother tongue is really valued within the school. To Jane, having signs in different languages is a “visible way to show the community what matters.” Both teachers hoped that students and families felt proud of their language, and believed that the signs could be one way of showing them that their mother tongue is respected in the school community. In addition to having signs in multiple languages, another strategy that Jane felt was important was the inclusion of dual language books in the curriculum. She believed, dual language books effectively showed parents that their native language is “absolutely encouraged and promoted at school.” Lastly, both teachers encouraged the integration of their students’ home languages into the curricular activities. More specifically, they recommended creating opportunities for students to do read alouds and complete learning tasks in their home languages.

These ideas and strategies mentioned by the teachers are in alignment with the recommendations from Araujo (2009), which suggested a need for educators to promote the preservation of the family’s native language, and to ask the parents for assistance in acknowledging and preserving their mother tongue. Therefore, as shown in the teachers’ responses and in past research, it is important for teachers and schools to affirm a parents’ native language, to ultimately promote a positive school environment to help them feel welcome and safe to become involved.

4.2.2 Invite parents to participate in school activities

Another practice that was found to be beneficial for promoting a welcoming environment for minority-language parents, involves actively inviting them to join and participate within the school community. Whether it was inviting the parents to participate in classroom learning or to help with school-wide decisions, both teachers repeatedly mentioned the need to “invite” parents
in. At Jane’s school, it was expected that each classroom teacher invited parents to join in on the learning, so she had created various opportunities throughout the year, to “actively invite” parents in to the classroom to participate in the student learning. She said “it could be anything, it could be a poetry reading, a regular math lesson, or a science experiment…the goal is to have parents come join, [and] I had to actively invite them.” Not only did the teachers invite parents in to observe and participate in the classroom learning, they also invited parents to facilitate learning and share their knowledge. Maxwell “liked having parents come in to the class, whatever the topic was, and invite them to speak on it or do a demonstration.” Furthermore, in recognizing the value in having minority-language parents involved in school wide decisions, the teacher participants recommended personally inviting them to join school meetings. The teachers believed it was important for school personnel to ask for parents input, and “invite them to the table” to share their opinions, to help them feel like a valued member of the school community.

The teachers’ responses are consistent with Ramirez’s (2000) recommendations, suggesting the idea that teachers should spend more time reaching out to diverse families, and inviting them to participate. They believed teachers and schools are able to create a more welcoming environment for minority-language parents by always inviting them to join and share their ideas, which Darch et al. (2004) also found to be beneficial.

4.2.3 Honour and integrate families’ cultures

The teachers’ responses indicated a need for the families’ cultural values and traditions to be interwoven into the school community, to help create a school environment that was welcoming to all families. They believed it was important to provide opportunities for parents and children to share information about their culture, country, and traditions in the classroom and school. Maxwell provided opportunities for “parents to come in and set up booths about their
country,” inviting families to share and learn about the diverse cultures and traditions within their school community. She also encouraged parents to share their cultural knowledge by inviting them to share traditions, cultural recipes, lived experiences, and their languages with her classes. Additionally, Maxwell’s school invited parents to come in and lead prayers in the prayer room. The teachers’ recommendations to acknowledge, respect and incorporate parents’ cultural values into the school activities, are in agreement with the recommendations found in the literature (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Berla, Garlington, & Henderson, 1993). Therefore, with consistent findings indicating the need to incorporate different languages and cultural values within the school community, I believe, it is important for teachers to further practice these techniques and understand how to effectively put them into practice.

4.3 Effective Communication Strategies to Reduce Language Barriers

In addition to creating a welcoming environment to promote increased parent involvement, the teachers also discussed the need for educators to adopt effective communication strategies to better meet the parents’ language needs. Two main strategies emerged from the findings to help promote effective communication with minority-language parents; the teachers encouraged the use of accessible methods of communication and to access supportive resources within the board. The following sections describe the strategies in further detail.

4.3.1 Make the communication accessible for all families

The teachers both reported the need for schools to communicate in a way that is accessible for all families, and offered promising practices for teachers and schools to adopt. One way to make communication accessible to minority-language parents, is to translate the information into the family’s mother tongue. For example, Maxwell reported having minutes of
the parent council meetings translated, to ensure “different groups of parents could access it.”

Another way teachers and schools can increase accessibility in their communication practices, is by replacing written information with more visual images. Jane emailed pictures from her classroom to update her students’ families, recognizing that this form of communication is not limited by language. In addition to translating information and sending more visual images, the teachers identified value in creating parent engagement opportunities that incorporated hands-on activities. For instance, Jane started a community garden at her school, and she found that minority-language parents could participate without language barriers; she said “it doesn’t matter your age, background or language when you’re gardening. It’s a hands-on project.” The teacher participants’ responses mentioned above, indicate an understanding of the value in using various methods of communication in order to meet the language needs of minority-language parents, which Pena (2000) also believed is an important teaching practice. Therefore, it is important for educators to be open to learning and trying various communication strategies to more effectively communicate with minority-language parents.

4.3.2 Access supportive resources within the board

The idea of accessing supportive resources to help minimize language barriers was also strongly recommended by both teacher participants. They believed it was essential for all teachers to make an effort to use supportive tools, such as officially translated documents, and interpreters to ultimately, improve their abilities to communicate with minority-language parents. The teacher participants found value in accessing translated documents to help communicate written information. They reported that the school boards provide access to translated school documents, in which they frequently use with their linguistically diverse parent communities. For important documents that are not translated, such as report cards, Maxwell
accessed a multi-lingual document, produced by the board, in which directs parents to connect with someone who speaks English to help them understand the content. In addition to using translated documents, they found value in accessing interpreters to help with oral conversations. They repeatedly discussed the need for educators to access interpreters to help make conversations “easier.” These findings echo those of Araujo (2009), on the need for teachers to use translated documents when communicating with minority-language parents, as well as those of Pena (2000) on the need for teachers to communicate all information in the parents’ mother tongue. By implementing these communication practices that promote accessibility, the teachers felt they were better able to communicate and build relationships with minority-language parents; however, it is important to note that other educators may not be as confident as these teachers. In the following section, I discuss certain factors that the teacher participants associated with their high level of self-confidence and overall success in collaborating with linguistically diverse parents.

4.4 Factors Contributing to Teacher’s High Levels of Self-Confidence in Parent Engagement

Another theme that emerged through data analysis highlights the factors that contributed to the teachers’ high levels of self-confidence in parent-engagement. The teachers both expressed high levels of perceived ability and confidence in engaging linguistically diverse families, and according to their responses, they ultimately attributed this to their increased knowledge and awareness of effective strategies and approaches. Specifically, when asked what experiences helped them feel confident, their responses placed significant emphasis on “knowing.” For example, Jane emphasized that “knowing how to book an interpreter, knowing how to use technology if needed, knowing which documents have already been translated, and knowing it
doesn’t have to be perfect” all helped with her confidence level. Similarly, Maxwell suggested that her confidence was positively impacted by her knowledge of how to access different board-wide resources. The teachers attributed this knowledge, and resulting high self-confidence, to their experience level, as well as the opportunity to have supportive administrators as role models and to participate in professional development.

4.4.1 Teacher experience level

The teachers’ responses suggested that their high levels of self-confidence and competence in communicating and collaborating with linguistically diverse families was positively correlated with the length of time they had been teaching, suggesting it had grown over the years. They believed that when they initially started teaching, they did not have the necessary knowledge base and skills to effectively engage parents. Jane mentioned that “there are a lot of best practices out there, that [she] would’ve loved to know in [her] first few years of teaching,” because when she started teaching “[she had] limited knowledge of how to work with English language learners or their families.” However, over the years, they have developed new knowledge and awareness that helped them feel more equipped and confident in their abilities to engage all families within a diverse classroom. Specifically, Maxwell remarked that “communicating with linguistically diverse families [now], is not an obstacle, because of [her] experience level.” Similarly, Jane said that “[her] confidence has grown through teaching” and that “[teachers] just need to figure it out as they go.”

As these findings show, their experience level, and the resulting knowledge acquisition, had positively impacted their confidence in engaging minority-language parents. Thus, to better support new teachers and promote higher self-confidence from the start, preservice and new
teachers need to participate in training opportunities that will help them become more aware of supportive resources and effective strategies to help with minority-language parent involvement.

4.4.2 Supportive administrators as role models

Another factor, in which the teachers found to promote higher levels of self-confidence, relates to their opportunities to learn and work with knowledgeable administrators. They were grateful to have worked at schools with encouraging and supportive administrators, who always made high-quality parent-involvement a priority. It was beneficial to have a principal who, as Jane said, “set the tone, and set high expectations for the school, in terms of connecting with all parents.” The teachers valued the opportunity to learn from their administrators, feeling as though their positive vision of parent-involvement was significantly guided by their administrators. With administrators as positive role models, they learned the knowledge and skills required to effectively communicate and collaborate with all families within a diverse school community. As Maxwell said, her administrators “modelled really good practices” which, ultimately, positively influenced her own success in parent involvement practices.

These findings echo those of Bernhard et al. (1998) on the benefits of having supportive administrators to promote success in creating effective parental involvement initiatives. Therefore, considering the role of the principal has been shown to be valuable in promoting effective collaboration and influencing future teaching practices, I believe it is important to ensure administrators have appropriate training and knowledge to successfully promote promising practices in parent involvement within their schools.

4.4.3 Professional development

The last factor that was identified to promote higher levels of self-confidence is the opportunity to participate in professional development sessions. They identified value in reading
academic research and in attending workshops to further their knowledge and understanding on the topic of parent engagement. They also found it beneficial to connect with other teachers and schools, to learn what they are doing to engage diverse family populations. Attending workshops and having conversations with other school staff, helped “open [Maxwell]’s mind, to thinking of other opportunities.” Ultimately the teachers stressed the value in further learning from other schools and programs, to improve their engagement strategies. In addition to having opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding, the teachers also suggested value in adopting certain mindsets to further nurture successful collaborations with minority-language parents, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.5 Teacher Mindsets that Promote Successful Collaboration

The last significant theme that emerged from the data suggests the teachers’ success in building partnerships with minority-language parents was a result of certain mindsets. They believed that they were better able to connect and collaborate with these parents because they developed a critical, determined and open mindset. Each of these mindsets will be discussed throughout the following sections.

4.5.1 Critical mindset

The teachers within this study attributed their success in building positive relationships with families, especially culturally and linguistically diverse families, to their ability and efforts to challenge their assumptions and biases. They found that many educators tended to have many assumptions and stereotypes about what parent involvement should “look like” that were inaccurate. However, Jane suggested that “if we were looking at it critically, we would see that all of our parents are wanting the best, and are involved in their child’s learning, to the best of their ability, and we just need to re-think about how we look at that.” Thus, they encouraged all
teachers to adopt a critical mindset, and avoid negatively judging parents according to their pre-conceived notion of involvement.

Furthermore, they emphasized a greater need to reflect critically on their personal assumptions when working with minority-language parents, because as Jane noticed “they tend to creep up more than they might with a family that is native English speaking.” Maxwell stated that “without examining yourself first, you’re not going to properly honour the voices and identities of the students and families in your classroom.” They believed that once teachers are able to understand their own personal privileges and assumptions, they can begin to truly question and challenge their practices and approach to parent engagement. Ultimately, to both Jane and Maxwell, it was the responsibility of the teacher to reflect critically on their own values and judgements, and ensure that their practices with minority-language parents were not founded on stereotypes.

The teachers’ responses highlight the need for educators to continually seek to understand their assumptions, in order to build and maintain genuine partnerships with parents, especially linguistically diverse parents. These findings echo those of Christianakis (2011) on the importance for all teachers to critically assess their biases and judgements, and to not criticize parents who do not meet their expectations of involvement.

4.5.2 Determined mindset

In addition to having a critical mindset, both of the teacher participants reported a need to adopt a determined mindset. When discussing their experiences in building successful partnerships with minority-language parents, they frequently mentioned their high level of determination. They recognized that it was sometimes more challenging to engage these parents, but as a result of their perseverance, they were able to overcome the barriers and achieve success.
Their responses suggested that the teacher needed to “keep” reaching out to the family and to “keep” trying a wide range of strategies and approaches until they find one that is successful. Maxwell noted that “we had to work really hard to get these parents into the school, so we tried a number of different strategies, and some of them work.” Maxwell encouraged educators and administrators to persevere and keep trying different ways to engage parents. Teachers need to understand that one strategy is not going to be successful for all families. Maxwell said that teachers need to “think outside the box, be open to trying new things, and use any resource that [they] can get your hands on.” They felt that it was advantageous for teachers to persevere and try different strategies until they have successfully met the parents’ needs. These findings are in alignment with past research (Darch et al., 2004), which encourages teachers to be innovative and find ways to include linguistically diverse parents in their child’s education.

4.5.3 Open mindset

Lastly, in addition to a critical and determined mindset, the teachers reported benefit in having an open mind when engaging minority-language parents. First of all, they need to be open to learning and trying new approaches, to ensure they are meeting the specific needs of these families. Jane mentioned that “often times, [she lets the method of communication] be directed by the family.” They also emphasized the importance in being “open” and receptive to parents input and ideas. For example, Jane expressed the need for teachers to “listen” to parents ideas, and “be open to shaking things up.” They found that many teachers and schools have a mindset where, as Jane said, “this is how we’ve always done it, this is how we’ve always engaged parents.” Maxwell agreed and emphasized the need for educators and schools to “keep disrupting it”; she “thinks teachers need to be open to receiving [the parents input] and actually changing
practice based on what they have said.” Thus, when working with culturally and linguistically diverse parents, the teachers found it was important to listen to and incorporate parents’ opinions and ideas into the school.

4.6 Conclusion to the Chapter

In this chapter, I identified and discussed five main themes that emerged through data analysis of the interviews with two Toronto school teachers. For the first theme, benefits of effective parent-teacher collaboration, the teachers found minority-language parental involvement to be beneficial for the teachers, students, and parents. The teachers suggested that partnerships with parents provided opportunities to learn from the parents and to build meaningful relationships with their students’ families, which they claimed helped improve their overall teaching practice. Additionally, the involvement of linguistically diverse families positively impacts minority-language students, bridging their home and school lives, and promoting a stronger sense of cultural and linguistic identity. Lastly, by becoming involved in the school and classroom, foreign-born, minority-language parents are likely to become more knowledgeable about the school processes, and as a result feel more effective in supporting their child’s education.

The second theme, ways to create a welcoming environment, highlighted the need for teachers to create a welcoming environment in order to promote engagement of minority-language parents. By celebrating and respecting the families’ mother tongue, incorporating their cultural values, and by always reaching out and actively inviting parents to join, they felt that minority-language immigrant parents would feel more comfortable participating in their child’s education. Therefore, similar to Araujo (2009), they felt that minority-language immigrant
families are more willing and comfortable to participate in school events when teachers incorporate their language and culture, and value the knowledge and wisdom the families have.

Furthermore, the third theme, effective communication strategies to reduce language barriers, suggested the need for educators to be aware and adopt effective strategies to reduce language barriers. The findings suggested benefit in using accessible forms of communication, and accessing supportive resources available through the board. By following these practices, teachers may be better able to communicate with minority-language parents.

The findings associated with the fourth theme, factors contributing to teachers’ high levels of self-confidence in parent engagement, showed that there are certain factors that may be beneficial to help nurture higher confidence levels in teachers. Their responses indicated a relationship between teaching experience level, opportunities to learn from administrators as well as through professional development, and with confidence levels to engage diverse parent groups. Considering Greenwood and Hickman (1991) suggested that a confident teacher is an essential ingredient to successful parent-involvement programs, I believe it is important for teachers to have opportunities to expand their knowledge.

Finally, the last theme, teacher mindsets that promote successful collaboration, emphasized a need for teachers to adopt certain personal habits to foster more successful partnerships with minority-language parents. The teachers encouraged other educators to critically reflect on their personal biases and assumptions, in order to promote more genuine and anti-bias relationships with linguistically diverse families. Also, there is benefit in persevering and continuing to implement different strategies until they have successfully met the parents’ needs. Lastly, in addition to becoming more aware of personal biases and more determined to achieve successful partnerships, the teachers also suggested value in having an open-mind. They
felt that educators should be open to listening to minority-language parents’ ideas and implementing them into the school practice. In chapter five, I will discuss the broad and narrow implications of these findings, and make recommendations for further research.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction to the Chapter

The purpose of the study was to provide a deeper understanding of the positive experiences of Toronto educators in building effective and collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse families. The findings of this study support and expand those of previous studies and contribute to an increased awareness of the teacher partnerships with minority-language parents within Toronto communities. This chapter provides a summary of the key research findings, presents this study’s implications, offers recommendations for various stakeholders, and proposes directions for future research.

5.1 Overview of the Key Findings and their Significance

The analysis and interpretation of the data, from the interviews with two Toronto educators, revealed five main themes: benefits of effective parent-teacher collaboration; ways to create a welcoming environment for parents; effective communication strategies to reduce language barriers; factors contributing to teacher’s high levels of self-confidence in parent engagement; and teacher mindsets that promote successful collaboration. The first theme, benefits of effective parent-teacher collaboration, highlights the value in building family-school partnerships, suggesting benefits for teachers, students, and parents alike. Through parent involvement, teachers are able to gain valuable information about students, which helps them meet the specific needs of the child in question and improves their teaching practices. It is important to note that these perceived benefits for teachers are not exclusively related to minority-language parent involvement; rather, these teacher benefits could be associated with involvement of all parents within the classroom. Furthermore, for minority-language students, seeing parents that reflect their cultural and linguistic identity within the school helps to affirm
their own cultural and linguistic identity. Lastly, the findings suggested that when minority-language immigrant parents become involved in school, they begin to feel more useful and needed in their child’s learning. In light of such findings, it is important for all school personnel to become more aware of the value of parent involvement to help promote social successes of linguistically diverse children and their families.

The second theme, ways to create a welcoming environment for parents, contributed to the overall understanding of promising practices in developing a safe and inclusive school and classroom environment where all families feel like they belong. The teacher participants found it beneficial for schools to honour and incorporate the parents’ mother tongue and cultural values in the school community, to show the parents that they are respected and valued within the school. Lastly, in addition to recognizing the parents’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, teachers need to actively invite these parents to participate in the classroom and school.

The third theme, effective communication strategies to reduce language barriers, proposed techniques for Toronto teachers to use in order to build effective and collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse families. The teachers found it advantageous for school personnel to strive towards using fully accessible methods of communication. This encouraged teachers to access diverse communication resources through the school board to support written and oral communication efforts, and to be innovative in their approaches to meet the parents’ varying linguistic needs.

The fourth theme, factors contributing to a teacher’s high level of self-confidence in parent engagement, highlighted teacher experiences that promoted an increased confidence in fostering successful parent-teacher partnerships. Knowledge acquisition from informed administrators, personal teaching experience, and professional development opportunities,
helped the teachers feel more confident and competent in their abilities to engage minority-language parents. With these findings, we can better understand how to support teachers in feeling more comfortable with family engagement strategies.

The fifth theme, teacher mindsets that promote successful collaboration, supported the importance of certain personal habits and attributes that help teachers foster greater success in engaging minority-language parents. The findings emphasized a need for teachers to adopt a critical mindset to help them become more aware of their personal biases and assumptions when working with culturally and linguistically diverse families. Also, it is advantageous for teachers to persevere and to continue trying different strategies until they have successfully met the parents’ needs. Lastly, when working with parents from diverse backgrounds, the teachers found it was important to have an open-mind; this encouraged the teacher participants to listen to and incorporate parents’ ideas into the school. The findings above suggest valuable implications for several stakeholders, which will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2 Implications

Examining the experiences of the educators allowed this study to shed new light on promising practices of teachers in effectively collaborating with minority-language parents. Also, in support of past findings (Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010), the teacher participants’ experiences also revealed significant value of parent involvement. These findings have important implications for both the educational community as well as my own teaching practice, which will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Broad: The educational research community

While this interview-based study was limited to the experiences of two Toronto educators, the data provides useful insights for teachers and administrators who work at schools
with linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Firstly, teachers and administrators who understand the significant value of parent involvement may be more determined to overcome challenges associated with minority-language parent involvement, through persistent effort. The teachers in the study truly understood the advantages of collaborating with parents, especially minority-language immigrant parents. As a result of their strong belief in parent involvement, the teachers were determined to find ways to overcome the barriers and foster successful parent-teacher partnerships. It is further important to note that they had contributed their deep understanding of the benefits of family-school collaboration, to their administrators who acted as their positive role models and mentors. With these findings in mind, steps should be taken to ensure both educators and administrators understand the significant benefits associated with parent involvement, especially when working with linguistically diverse family populations.

Secondly, the data presented the importance of educators being aware of effective strategies and techniques that foster more successful partnerships with minority-language parents. The teachers in the study found it beneficial to provide information in the parents’ native languages and to integrate family culture into the school and classroom; this showed the parents that their cultural and linguistic backgrounds were valued in school, and made home-school communication more accessible. Thus, educators and administrators may be more successful in engaging minority-language parents if they acknowledge and incorporate the family’s native language and cultural values. School boards should provide opportunities to inform educators of effective methods to integrate the families’ cultures and languages into the school community, to ultimately promote more successful partnerships.

In addition to knowing how to effectively collaborate with minority-language parents, educators need to feel confident in facilitating these collaborative partnerships. The findings are
in accord with Greenwood and Hickman (1991), both suggesting that a confident teacher is an essential ingredient to successful parent-involvement programs. This study’s findings, highlighted specific types of experiences that helped promote high teacher self-confidence in initiating parent involvement with diverse family populations. Having the opportunity to learn from informed administrators, from the teachers’ themselves over the years, and from professional development opportunities, helped foster high levels of self-confidence. Thus, to ensure that educators feel confident in their practices, it may be beneficial for them to have opportunities to expand their knowledge in working with diverse parent populations.

Lastly, educators need to challenge their assumptions to promote more equitable and inclusive partnerships with their diverse family populations. The teachers found they were better able to engage minority-language immigrant parents when they were aware of their personal biases and assumptions. As shown in past research (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Georgis et al., 2014; Waanders et al., 2007), teachers and administrators need to broaden their understanding of parent involvement beyond traditional views of parent support in schools, and recognize all forms of involvement as a valuable contribution to their child’s education. Furthermore, it is necessary for school personnel to better understand their personal biases and stereotypes, as it relates to parent involvement with their students’ families, to ultimately promote more successful parent-teacher partnerships. Strategies to increase a teacher’s ability to critically reflect on their own identity and vision of parent involvement may improve a teacher’s success in collaborating with minority-language parents.

5.2.2 Narrow: My professional identity and practice

In addition to providing important implications for the education community, this study’s findings also have implications for my personal teaching practices. I found it very valuable to
learn from the teachers’ positive experiences in successfully collaborating with minority-language parents, as much of the literature focuses on the challenges in building effective partnerships with these parents (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Georgis et al., 2014; Leithwood, 2009; Pena, 2000; Turney & Kao, 2009). Hearing my participants’ personal stories, including the positive impact that strong parent-teacher relationships had on their career, further inspired me to ensure, as a beginning teacher, I will include this in my classroom.

Firstly, I will strive to always acknowledge and integrate the use of the families’ native languages and their cultural values in classroom activities. Secondly, I will not be discouraged when my efforts are not initially successful, because I have learned that it sometimes requires persistence to engage parents successfully in the classroom community. Additionally, I should not expect that the same strategy or approach would work for all families. I need to continue to try different methods until I find one that works in the particular context of my teaching practice. Further, it is important to ask parents how they wish to become involved, and not assume that my understanding of parent involvement is the same as the parents’ views. I will strive to critically reflect on my own assumptions of parent involvement, as well as on my own personal identity. Furthermore, I need to remember that parents are my allies; I should not be afraid to ask for support and feedback, because we are both working together to help their child achieve success. Lastly, to ensure I have high self-confidence to invite parents to become involved in my future classroom, I will participate in various professional develop opportunities where I can learn from different schools. In the following section, I present several recommendations for various stakeholders, based on the findings and broad implications.
5.3 Recommendations

Based on the information gathered from the Toronto educators in this study, I have developed specific recommendations, suggesting action items for various stakeholders to adopt. The first recommendation encourages school boards to create opportunities to help administrators develop a deeper understanding of the significant benefits associated with parent involvement, especially when working with minority-language immigrant parents. School boards in Toronto should organize and facilitate yearly workshops where all administrators, within that board, would need to attend. These workshops should provide an opportunity for administrators to hear from other schools’ positive experiences in building successful partnerships with linguistically diverse families, and learn how these partnerships have significantly impacted their practices. Further, the administrators should also become aware of the benefits from the perspectives of the parents, children, and teachers. Therefore, there should be an opportunity, within the workshop, for these various stakeholders to share their thoughts, as it relates to their perceived benefits of parent-teacher partnerships. Ultimately, it is hoped that by ensuring administrators understand the significant value in engaging families of diverse linguistic backgrounds, they may become more committed to ensure the educators at their school also understand the value of effective parent involvement.

Additionally, school boards in Toronto should develop informational webinars for their administrators and educators to have access to, informing them of the diverse communication tools available to them through the board. This webinar should be mandatory for all new administrators and educators, as it will provide useful information that may help nurture higher levels of confidence in their abilities to engage minority-language parents. After completing the webinar, the educators and administrators should have a deeper understanding of what
supportive resources are available in their board, and how to access each one. Further, if the school board adds a new resource or diverse linguistic tool to their online database, they should always inform their schools by sending an updated newsletter. In the same way, the Ontario Ministry of Education should provide updated guidelines and recommendations for schools; suggesting effective strategies to help school personnel foster more collaborative partnerships with linguistically diverse parents. Providing opportunities for educators and administrators to become more aware of effective strategies and communication tools may nurture self-confidence in their abilities to communicate with their minority-language parent population.

Thirdly, educators should participate in anti-bias education training. In this training program, educators should learn the value of critically reflecting upon their own personal assumptions and biases. They should examine their beliefs and teaching practices in the context of societal inequities in Ontario. The training should also encourage educators to explore ways of challenging their schools to be responsive in including all families into the school activities. As a result of this training, teachers should have the skills to create a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming classroom for their students and families.

Lastly, to promote higher self-confidence and competence among new teachers, teacher education programs should include more information on effective parent involvement programs. Student teachers should participate in courses that encourage them to work with parents and help them develop strategies that reflect the parents’ diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They should be expected to develop and facilitate parent involvement programs within their practicum experiences, to practice the skills and strategies they have learned through coursework. With all of the recommendations listed above, I feel that educators and administrators will become more confident and successful in building partnerships with the diverse parent populations in their
school communities. In the following section, I suggest directions for future research to further explore effective parent involvement of minority-language parents.

5.4 Future Research

Given the aim of the study was to understand the experiences of Toronto educators in building effective partnerships with minority-language parents, I believed the participants needed to have experience working with this diverse parent population, and have at least five years of teaching experience at a Toronto school. However, to provide a broader understanding of the experiences of Toronto educators, further research should be done using the same research questions and method, but increasing the sample size and adjusting participant criteria. Researchers could use a larger sample size and recruit several teachers from each school board in Toronto, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of Toronto educators. Instead of recruiting educators with at least five years teaching experience, researchers could explore and compare the practices of Toronto educators with varying levels of experience; interviewing educators with less than one-year experience as well as educators with close to thirty-years’ experience. Additionally, both of the participants in the study were native-born, English speaking teachers, and it could be beneficial to examine the experiences of minority-language immigrant teachers. By adjusting the participant criteria to involve Toronto educators with varying levels of experience, and with linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, could introduce different perspectives, ultimately helping to foster a deeper understanding of Toronto educators in engaging minority-language parents.

Another area of future research could examine the same research question and approach, but instead of focusing on educators in Toronto, the study could involve educators from rural communities in Ontario. This research could provide insight into the experiences and practices of
educators who do not teach in urban schools, and may have fewer opportunities to collaborate with diverse families. It could compare the experiences of teachers within urban and rural communities, further expanding our understanding of teachers’ experiences in building effective parent involvement with minority-language parents, but from different contexts.

Further, examining parental involvement from the perspective of minority-language immigrant parents and students was beyond the scope of analysis, but is an important direction for future research. Having minority-language parents and students articulate their experiences could help to provide a more complete illustration of positive parent-school partnerships, from all perspectives. Similarly, it could be beneficial to also include administrators in the research study; data on administrators’ experiences and attitudes could be gathered, to further contribute to a deeper understanding of parent-school partnerships.

5.5 Concluding Comments

Given the growing number of immigrant and refugee families settling in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2008), and the numerous positive outcomes associated with parent involvement (Araujo, 2009; Epstein, 2001; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010), Toronto educators should understand how to effectively create culturally and linguistically sensitive parent involvement programs. Recognizing there is minimal research that focuses specifically on the positive experiences of Toronto educators in building collaborative partnerships with minority-language parents, this study attempted to fill the gap and shed new light on the promising practices of Toronto educators in engaging families of diverse linguistic backgrounds. The analysis of the data from the two semi-structured interviews with Toronto educators identified emergent themes that suggested effective strategies that can strengthen communication and partnerships, and can develop a safe and inclusive environment, to ultimately improve
minority-language parent involvement. This study is important as it provides current and future educators with a deeper understanding of effective strategies and methods that can be used to effectively address the needs of the diverse student and parent populations in Toronto classrooms.
References


Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date: _______________________________

Dear ______________________________,

My name is Hilary Davidson and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the experiences of Toronto school teachers working with linguistically diverse families. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have experience working with parents of a diverse linguistic background. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or wherever you might prefer. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my research coordinator, Angela MacDonald. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: Hilary Davidson
Phone number, email:
Research Coordinator’s name: Angela MacDonald
Email: angela.macdonald@utoronto.ca
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Hilary Davidson and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________

Name: (printed) ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol/Questions

Introductory Script: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to shed insight on the experiences of Toronto educators in fostering partnerships with minority-language parents. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on your experiences with parent involvement. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and that you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Questions: Participant Background/School Context
1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
2. Can you tell me about the linguistic diversity of the school? And your classroom?
   a. Have any of the students in your classroom recently immigrated (within 10 years) to Canada?
3. What are your experiences working with English language learners?
4. What is your first language?
5. Did you grow up in an English speaking country and household?

Experience with Minority-Language Parent Involvement:
7. In your experience, how are minority-language parents engaged in their child’s education?
8. Are they more, less, or equally involved in the learning process than the parents of native-English speaking parents? Can you explain?
9. For minority-language parents, what factors do you think might impact their involvement?
10. What level of confidence do you have when communicating with linguistically diverse families?
   a. If answered low – Why do you think this is? What would give you more confidence?
   b. If answered high – What experiences have helped you feel confident when communicating with linguistically diverse families?

Parent Involvement:
11. What are your beliefs about having parents involved in their child’s education?
12. Can you tell me about your experience with parent involvement in your classroom?
   a. What type(s) of involvement do you see? (i.e. classroom volunteer, decision maker, help with homework, audience, program supporter, co-learner)
13. How do you characterize effective parent involvement?
**Perceived Benefits and Challenges:**
14. Could you please discuss the things that have helped you the most in providing effective parent-school partnerships? (Prompt – resources, supports, training?)
15. What are the types of challenges that you have faced when establishing relationships with minority-language, foreign-born families?
16. How do you respond to these challenges?
17. Do these challenges differ from the challenges you encounter when establishing relationships with native-English speaking families?
18. In your opinion, how do you feel effective parent partnerships have influenced your teaching practice?

**Teacher Strategies:**
19. What are some of the strategies that you use to engage parents in the school?
20. What are some of the strategies that you use to honour the voices of the families and communities?
21. What methods of communication do you use when working with minority-language parents?

**Next Steps:**
22. What advice would you give to teachers to help them foster positive parent-school partnerships with minority-language families?
23. Is there anything else you would like to add with respect to involvement of minority-language parents within the school community?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.