



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Summer 2005

FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Best Practices for Involving Parents in Our School's Academic Program

List of group members: Nancy Hargrave, Jessica Norkaitis, Joan Pokorak, Mary Russell, Sara Jo Sites

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and on disk using this form. Include information under each of the following headings.

The Teacher Center of Broome County is requesting that two members of each study group funded as of June 2005 share the information gained through their study with other consortium members by presenting a workshop during the 2005 -2006 school year. Please indicate on your final report who we should contact to make arrangements for your presentation.

Name	School/District	Phone	E-Mail Address
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Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

We intended to determine what practices could be established for involving parents and families in the academic program at Glenwood Elementary School.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

1. Gather and review resources
2. Determine in what areas our students need the most support
3. Begin the design of a parent education and a math/reading night at our school
4. Create booklets for parents with easy ideas for helping their child at home

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

1. We gathered and reviewed resources, including standardized test results and teacher feedback.
2. We determined what areas in reading and math would be most important to address. We decided that we would focus on inference and predictions in English Language Arts and number sense and operations in Math.
3. We outlined two nights at our school. We will be inviting all parents, teachers, and students to join S.P.I.E.S. – School and Parents Invested in Educational Success. The

- title was chosen to stress the importance of teamwork between teachers and parents – we will be “cluing them in” on techniques we use that they could also use at home.
4. The first night, held in the fall, will be titled: “Uncovering Strategies for Success – Part 1: Clues to Help Your Child Learn”. We found a lively speaker to address parents and determined what messages we wanted her to get across. For example, she will address how to determine how much help to give your child on his or her homework and school projects.
 5. The second night, “Uncovering Strategies for Success - Part 2: Clues for Collaborating with Your Child” will occur in early winter. We will begin our second night with a Readers’ Theater based on a detective theme that will teach children about prediction and inference. Students and parents will then complete activities that focus on solving problems by gathering clues and supporting predictions. We chose three math activities and three reading activities that could be easily modified to meet the needs of students at all grade levels. Students will be given a “Clue Notebook” to write down their answers and when they complete an activity they will receive a hole punch on their “Clue Card” from a teacher or high school helper.
 6. Along with the activities, we made a list of fun and easy ideas to help students at home. In math, the ideas cover the other strands that will not be addressed with the activities. In reading, the ideas focus on other ways to help students understand what they read by asking appropriate questions and helping students think critically and support their answers.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

- How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

We have learned a great deal from what we have read and from each other. We have grown as we have studied how to communicate effectively with families. Many of the techniques we will be teaching parents are things we can also do in our classrooms. The dissemination of information –ideas coming from Intermediate area teachers and Primary Teachers plus area specialists-- lead to greater understanding of everyone’s role in the success of each student.

- What evidence do you **expect** to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

We anticipate that the shared vocabulary between parents and teachers will greatly impact our students. This partnership will help create consistency for our students and help them practice critical thinking skills both at school and at home. School communication is often a one-way exchange; we have developed a way for parents to communicate to the teacher such topics as: “what they might try” “what surprised them” “what they found unhelpful.”

- What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

We have created two informational nights for parents and students. We have also created a booklet to share with families. The above-mentioned survey will also provide information.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

We thoroughly enjoyed the process. Meeting in the Glenwood School Library gave us access to computers and books. Teachers were also able to go to their classroom and find data/materials. We valued the opportunity to work together and share ideas. Because it was

in the summer, we were able to spend long periods of time together. It was amazing to see how many ideas came out of the process as we pooled our thoughts and resources.

How can we make this study group program better?

Perhaps the Teacher's Center could consider using one of its sessions (Workshops) to explain all of the possible ways teachers can get grants from the Center. Should we take pictures to add to your publicity file? PR could help your funding stream. It would also be helpful if it was possible to download the file with the grant application. It was difficult to make corrections and revisions in the online format because it could not be saved to a computer.