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The home-school interface parental and teacher beliefs about homework from a multicultural perspective

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The Home-School Interface:
Parental and Teacher Beliefs about Homework from a Multicultural Perspective

By

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Abstract

The present exploratory study investigated the beliefs and practices of parents of various cultural groups, as well as teachers, regarding educational issues. The central focus was upon homework, the day to day link between school and home. A main objective of the research was to determine how individual and subcultural variations in parenting style (Baumrind, 1973) are linked with attitudes and practices towards the school.

Interviews were conducted with 36 parents of 7th and 8th graders in three different ethnic groups, drawn from an urban junior high school in Toronto. There were equal numbers of sons and daughters in each of the three groups: Anglo, East Indian and Greek. Twelve teachers from the same school were also interviewed. In the first part of the semi-structured interview, respondents were asked about parent-child decision-making patterns around a number of issues. Responses were used to characterize three parenting styles (Baumrind, 1973): permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. The rest of the interview included questions on attitudes regarding the value of homework, practices regarding study, contact with and feelings about the school, ideas about home and school influences on child learning, and forced choice attributions for the child's performance in six academic areas. As well, a prediction task was included, in which children wrote the math portion of the

WRAT after parents predicted their performance.

Results indicated that teachers as a whole were more authoritative than parents in terms of decision-making ideals. Anglo parents were most permissive, while the East Indian and Greek parents scored highest on authoritarianism. The East Indian and Greek parents valued homework more and reported greater use of control and reward strategies when dealing with homework than the Anglo parents. When dealing with homework-related problems, Anglo parents reported a greater number of strategies and were more likely to form liaisons with the school. They also reported having more resources at home for their children. The frequency of school contact in general did not vary significantly across ethnic groups, although Anglo parents reported more contact regarding homework issues.

Analyses of parenting style across ethnic groups revealed that authoritativeness was associated with more structuring and monitoring of homework, more liaison efforts with the school and more frequent and valued school contact. Permissive parents experienced least contact with the school. Authoritative parents attributed their children's school performance most to the home and least to ability, while authoritarian parents attributed least to the school and most to ability. As expected, authoritative parents assume most responsibility and play a more active role in their children's school life than permissive and

authoritarian parents.

Expectations that Anglo parents would share more homework attitudes and beliefs with teachers than East Indian and Greek parents were generally not supported. The greatest discrepancies emerged between parents and teachers as a whole. Teachers were least in favor of direct parental intervention with homework, and most in favor of structuring practices. They attributed children's school performance more to the home, while parents perceived the school/teacher factor as more important in determining academic success.

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Introduction

It is widely recognized that parents play a crucial role in their children's learning by providing necessary stimulation and structuring of the environment to promote cognitive development. While considerable research has been devoted to adult-child interactions in the early pre-school years, surprisingly few studies have specifically examined the parent's role as "teacher" in the context of older, school-aged children. This is certainly an important area to examine, as numerous findings suggest that the home environment has a tremendous impact upon children's school progress (e.g., Hess, Kashigawi, Azuma, Price & Dickson, 1980). By creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and by actively supporting and assisting with school-related activities, parents can positively affect their children's school experience. Thus, the investigation of parental beliefs and practices concerning homework and learning is an important issue, with far-reaching implications for children.

Ideally, the home and school should function as complementary forces in a child's life, supporting and reinforcing his/her learning and development. However, a wide gap of misunderstanding often divides parents and teachers, resulting in mutual suspicion and tension rather than collaborative partnerships (Lightfoot, 1979). In a multicultural society such as Canada, such parent-teacher divisions become widened when educators are faced with

families holding culturally diverse values and beliefs regarding education and learning. Some researchers maintain that these cultural differences play a key role in the considerable academic problems experienced by many minority children (e.g., Cummins, 1984).

In order to promote understanding and cooperation between the school and home (particularly the ethnic home), it is important to examine the belief systems and practices of both teachers and parents regarding children's learning. The present study investigates the attitudes, beliefs and practices of parents from various cultural backgrounds, as well as teachers, around issues of education and learning, focussing specifically upon homework, the home-school interface. It is hoped that this research will be a step toward generating effective community-based interventions which can replace traditional divisions with collaborative parent-teacher partnerships.

In order to provide the necessary perspective and understanding of the issues at hand, the following topic areas will be reviewed: 1) problems of minority students in the school system 2) parental belief systems 3) interventions aimed at improving home-school relations 4) parenting styles 5) tutoring styles and cognitive development as conceptualized by Vygotsky. Following this, the general orienting questions of the present study will be described.

Problems of Minority Students

The past two decades have witnessed a dramatic influx of 'New Canadians', individuals who have severed ties with their homeland to face the challenge of coping in a new, largely unfamiliar, milieu. In addition to European immigrants, the introduction of a non-discriminatory immigration policy in 1967 generated a surge in non-white migration, particularly from the West Indies and Asia. It is estimated that in the decade between 1968 and 1978, 30,000 immigrants arrived from India and Pakistan, 100,000 from the West Indies, and 60,000 from Africa (Samuda, 1983).

While these waves of immigration pose challenges and raise issues for the country as a whole, no single institution is more profoundly affected than the Canadian education system. According to Cummins (1984), approximately 50 percent of students in the Toronto school system claim a tongue other than English as their first language. In some Toronto school boards, more than half of the student body is raised in homes with an ethnic background other than the dominant culture.

Certainly, the ethnic and racial diversity in the school system provides unique opportunities for cultural sharing and enrichment, with great potential for multicultural learning and the promotion of racial tolerance. However,

enthusiasm for the growing multicultural profile of Canada's schools is tempered by a disturbing, increasingly evident problem. Both researchers and staff personnel have expressed growing concern that a significant number of children from ethnic minorities are experiencing serious difficulties in the school setting (Cummins, 1981).

When an ethnic minority child enters the school milieu, he or she brings the socialization and values of home into the context. Not surprisingly, his or her patterns of interaction with peers and teacher often differ significantly from those of Anglo students. Numerous studies have discerned dramatic cultural differences in day to day classroom interactions. Philips (1972) observed that native Indian children were reluctant to participate in large group recitations led by teachers, yet were more talkative than non-Indian children in student-led projects. Differences were attributed to learning at home (Philips, 1972).

Boggs (1985) reports that Hawaiian children participate easily in choral responses and will individually volunteer information to receptive teachers, yet are silent when called on by name. Once again, home patterns of socialization are seen as the key to explaining such inconsistent behavior.

An observation of Chinese and Mexican-American children's

classroom interaction patterns over several years yielded further interesting cultural differences. The Mexican students were perceived as more socially mature and able to work cooperatively in small groups. In contrast, Chinese children displayed a pronounced orientation towards the teacher, and were frequently competing with each other for this adult approval. Mirroring earlier conclusions, Fillmore (cited by Cummins, 1984) attributes this pronounced behavioral disparity to socialization differences in the home, pointing to the use of shame in the Chinese family to promote conformity to adult expectations, as well as strong parental pressure to achieve school success.

Empirical evidence underscores the fact that significant cultural differences in behavior, social interaction and learning styles exist among various ethnic groups. In view of these differences, considerable literature suggests that the Anglo teacher's lack of awareness and sensitivity to various cultural norms may result in frequent misinterpretations of students' behavior (e.g., Costa & DiSanto, 1973; Trueba, 1981). Data from the U.S. suggest that white teachers hold lower expectations of black pupils, even those of high ability (Rubovits & Maehr, 1973). According to Elliston (1976) in a report for the Scarborough Board of Education, the Canadian school system faces similar problems:

> Failure to understand the nature of the child's cultural background and hence his difficulties often result in inappropriate placement, injudicious labelling and low

> expectations. For example, in the area of family life, many Canadian teachers show an inordinate curiosity about the variegated patterns of family relationships. This information is often not translated into helpful classroom practices. Instead, given such information, there is a tendency to depreciate the child's past and/or current family lifestyle and to see such children as lacking in social worth (Elliston, 1976, p. 8).

A number of British findings shed further light on cultural problems in the school system. In a survey of Handwo··th area schools, the majority of educators labelled children of West Indian and Asian parentage as part of the "disadvantaged" group. As well, school heads admitted to lowering their standards and expectations with the increasingly multiracial student body (Tomlinson, 1984). Additional British research reveals a high degree of cultural misunderstanding of students among teachers. For example, a significant percentage admitted to feeling threatened or anxious when interacting with West Indian pupils. Controversial issues included misunderstandings of the West Indian cultural gestures, dialect and interaction styles (Driver, 1977). Brittan (1976) conducted a survey of 850 teachers' opinions concerning their pupils. Findings revealed that ethnic students were most frequently labelled as creating discipline problems and of low academic ability. It is evident that the potential for misunderstandings and conflict is great between the classroom teacher and minority group child. Similarily, the relationship between minority group parent and teacher is often fraught with misunderstanding and resentment - each maintains a set of

cultural values and attitudes which may clash sharply with the other. For example, parents of certain ethnic groups may believe that education represents the sole responsibility of the school, and thus may fail to involve themselves with their child's learning (Lightfoot, 1979).

Historically, the home-school relationship has been characterized by misunderstanding and tension, with a profound lack of communication and mutual partnership existing between teacher and parent. The traditional teacher-parent relationship is structured as a hierarchical, professional-client dyad, with the parent often experiencing feelings of helplessness, intimidation and frustration. Lightfoot (1979) maintains that parental alienation and discomfort with the educational system stem from the traditional perception of teachers as authority figures, to be feared and respected.

Clearly, the added dimension of cultural and racial differences serves to fuel an already volatile situation (Tomlinson, 1984). Lightfoot (1979) perceives a heightening of conflict and distrust between families and schools when the gap in status and power is widened. She notes that, historically, schools served to maintain social order, control and the status quo, providing a solid barricade against the beliefs and ideas of "deviant" and threatening strangers.

According to Tomlinson, the underlying base of conflict involves a mismatch of expectations between ethnic parents and the Anglo school system, with many teachers lacking a clear conception of their role in a multiethnic society (Tomlinson, 1984). Teachers are mainly white and middle class, educated into an ethnocentric view of the world. As practitioners they have "rarely received guidance and advice on contact and communication with ethnic minority parents, and are left to develop approach and practices on an ad hoc basis" (Tomlinson, 1984, p.37). Thus, it is hardly surprising to learn that some teachers develop stereotyped or negative beliefs about minorities, and feel threatened or defensive in their contacts with minority parents.

Given these issues of cultural "discrepancies" in views of development and education and their potential role in the multiethnic school system, it seems important to review next the research literature on parental belief systems, and their links to parent behavior and child schooling.

Parent Belief Systems

A relatively new area of developmental research has emerged which focusses upon the set of beliefs and values which parents hold in relation to child development and learning. Essentially, investigators propose that parents espouse clear, well-defined ideas concerning the nature of children and child development (e.g., nature of learning, timetable of expectations, value of social skills) and that these theories hold important consequences for children's outcomes (Goodnow, 1980; Hess et al.,1980). This conceptual framework is intrinsically linked to earlier work by Heider (1958) and Baldwin (1967) who espoused the idea of "naive psychology". These earlier researchers sought to understand the thought patterns or "constructions of reality" employed by ordinary people in their attempts to rationalize their everyday world (Baldwin,1967; Heider, 1958). According to Heider, "the ordinary man has a great and profound understanding of himself and of other people which, although unformulated, enables him to interact with others in more or less adaptive ways" (Heider, 1958, p.65).

Focussing upon the realm of adult-child interactions, recent literature suggests that parents embrace an "informal theory of development", which enables them to make sense of their care-taking role. Research indicates that parents entertain concrete ideas about expectations for their children in both

social and cognitive domains (Goodnow,1984; Hess et al.,1980; McGillicuddy-de Lisi, 1982). According to Goodnow (1984b) , these "informal" theories serve to determine parents' task-setting behavior towards their children, as well as guiding their assessments of progress.

Goodnow challenges the notion that parents' ideas are modified through information gained in the course of parenting. She contends that parents are working less from "personal constructs" (Kelly, 1955) than from schemas provided by others. Schweder (1982) maintains that these ideas appear to be "prepackaged" in nature, and highly resistant to change. In support of this perspective, adult research has discerned a number of widely-shared ideas among parents, with many fewer differences revealed than expected in view of the diversity of the parenting experience. According to Goodnow (1984b), "cultural transmission" plays a significant role in the acquisition and maintenance of the belief system - she maintains that these welldefined ideas and values are deeply rooted in one's cultural heritage. Schweder (1982) refers to these ideas collectively shared by members of a group as "cultural representations".

A wide array of cross-cultural research supports the proposition that parental beliefs are, at least to some extent, culture-specific. (e.g., Goodnow, 1980). In a large scale study by Hess, Kashigawi, Azuma, Price and Dickson (1980), age expectancies held by Japanese and

American mothers were explored. Findings revealed that the two cultural groups varied significantly in mean overall expectations, with the American mothers holding earlier expectations for their children. Most pronounced differences occurred in the domains of "skills with peers" and "verbal assertiveness", with American mothers much more likely to expect related skills earlier than those from the Japanese group. Interestingly, national background emerged as the only significant variable, with SES and mother's education revealing no significant effect (Hess et al., 1980).

In a partial replication, Goodnow (1984a) investigated child-related beliefs and expectations of two groups of mothers in Australia: Australian-born and Lebanese-born. Results indicated dramatic cultural differences in both expectations and teaching patterns, thereby further bolstering the contention that cultural factors influence parental beliefs. Once again, nationality emerged as the only significant variable, with no significant effects revealed for gender or birth order of child. Similar to the early findings, the sharpest differences appeared in the areas of "social skills with peers" and "verbal assertiveness", with "Australian" mothers holding much earlier expectations than "Lebanese" mothers. In addition, Anglo mothers were far more likely to describe themselves as actively teaching school-related skills before their children entered school. Significant differences in the

parental approach to learning were also revealed. Fifty-eight percent of the Anglo group claimed that they take the initiative and "bring things up" in the learning context, compared to 21 percent of "Lebanese" mothers. Results suggest that Anglo mothers perceive themselves as much more active in the teaching role than their Lebanese-born counterparts (Goodnow, 1984a).

Cross-cultural evidence strongly suggests that ethnic background plays an important role in shaping parents' conceptions about the nature of childhood in general, and more specifically, the processes involved in child learning. As noted earlier, Goodnow (1984a) discovered that Lebanese-born mothers expressed significantly less concern about preparing their young children for school by actively teaching school-related skills. In contrast to the Anglo mothers, who explicitly listed specific skills which they would teach their pre-school children, most Lebanese parents provided vague responses, conceding that they would leave "most things to the school". Further, only 14% of Lebanese mothers sent their children to pre-school, compared to 82% in the Anglo group. While most Anglo mothers perceived this early enrolment as "good preparation for school" by teaching their children to "get along with other kids", the majority of Lebanese mothers expected such social skills to naturally develop later, with no need for conscious preparation (Goodnow, 1984a).

Several issues emerge from these findings. First, one could conclude that the more relaxed timetable for school-related skills adopted by the Lebanese mothers reflects a lesser value placed on these achievements, as compared to the Anglo parents. Other studies have demonstrated this link between parental beliefs and cultural values. For example, Hess et al.(1980) discovered that Japanese childraising beliefs reflected the cultural value placed upon emotional control. Similarily, it was found that early assertiveness with both adults and peers in the United States is valued and encouraged (Harkness & Super, 1977). However, Goodnow (1984b, 1985) proposes that variations in age-expectancies may transcend the concept of value and stem from fundamental differences in cultural beliefs. The pervasive Anglo-Saxon motto which appears to dominate parental thinking asserts that "earlier is better". This adage implies first that it is desirable to teach important behaviors and skills as early as possible, and second, that a real danger exists of leaving this instruction until it is "too late". It is conceivable that all cultures may not share this child-rearing philosophy. The Lebanese-born mothers in Goodnow's study, for example, displayed a more laissez-faire attitude towards their children, believing that skills can be learned when needed.

The second interesting point stemming from Goodnow's results involves the school's role: to what extent is the school responsible for the child's learning? The present findings

suggest that Lebanese-born mothers place more responsibility on the educational system as compared to Anglo mothers, who appear to hold clear, specific expectations of what skills the schools should teach (Goodnow, 1984a). Other studies reveal further cultural variations, indicating that ethnic groups hold varying ideas about the divisions of labor between parent and teacher (e.g., Ghuman, 1975).

Clearly, expectations concerning the roles and responsibilities of formal education vary between cultures. As a consequence, teachers are frequently confronted with parents whose expectations are unknown to them, and whose children seem "unprepared" for school. Often the beliefs and values of ethnic cultures clash with those espoused by the education system of the host country. These differences and misunderstandings may be clarified by knowing where expectations vary.

Thus, in order to promote greater communication and understanding between home and school, it is worthwhile to investigate further the issue of parental beliefs and expectations, focussing specifically on education and achievement. Goodnow (1980) suggests that cultural variation in parental belief systems may in fact underlie the widely cited ethnic differences in academic achievement. With regard to these academic variations between cultural groups, a pressing question emerges: Does a causal link exist between the beliefs and expectations which parents

hold and their child's school performance? A wide body of literature seems consistent with this hypothesis. In the large scale Stanford-Tokyo study, where age-related expectations of American and Japanese mothers were tapped, a positive correlation was found between early parental expectations in certain areas and child performance. Findings revealed that age-expectations for school-related skills and verbal assertiveness were predictive of all three outcomes: parents who expected these skills at earlier ages had children who scored higher on the measures (Hess et al., 1980).

Parsons, Adler and Kaczela (1982) investigated attitudes and expectations about math among fifth to eleventh grade students and their parents. Results showed that parent modelling was less predictive of child attitudes than mere parental expectancy indicators. Clearly, parental beliefs and expectations profoundly affect children's performance and attitudes.

Schaefer and Edgerton's (1985) studies of parental values lend further support to the proposed relationship between parent beliefs and child outcome. Parents of kindergarten and first grade children were surveyed about their values and beliefs concerning child development. Findings revealed significant correlations between parent values and all outcome measures. Of course, all of these studies are correlational in nature, and cannot demonstrate any causal

links between parent values and child performance. Nevertheless, they at least indicate that such an hypothesis is viable.

A number of investigators have focussed upon the association between parent beliefs and parert behavior, maintaining that parental behavior may provide an important mediating link between parent beliefs and child outcomes. Miller (1986) examined mothers' judgements of their first grade children's cognitive abilities on IQ tasks, as well as the relation between these predictions and children's actual developmental levels. Results indicated that more accurate mothers had children who scored higher on the various tasks. Miller hypothesizes that parents who show greatest insight when judging their children's abilities are those who most effectively teach and structure learning situations to promote maximum cognitive development in their children.

In a further study, parents of pre-school children were first interviewed about their beliefs regarding child development and learning, and then were observed working with their children on various tasks (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1982). Parent teaching strategy was coded in terms of level of "distancing behavior" (i.e., the degree to which this strategy places low, intermediate or high cognitive demands on the child). Results were consistent with earlier findings, indicating a moderate relationship between parental beliefs and teaching behavior. Mothers' beliefs

about child development and learning were generally predictive of their teaching behavior. For example, parents who believed children absorb knowledge spent less time interacting with their children on the tasks than parents who viewed children as dependent on others to guide their behavior. As well, parents who perceived their children as active processors of knowledge used high-level questions more frequently than their counterparts who held a more "passive" view of children's cognitive development.

What implications are associated with these empirical findings concerning parental belief systems? A number of researchers express confidence that parental beliefs offer a "vehicle for change". From their viewpoint, altering ideas provides an effective, far-reaching technique of changing parental behaviors, which will ultimately hold positive consequences for the child. The fact that intervention programs, based upon altering parents' attitudes, can affect parental behaviors is well documented (Dickie & Gerber, 1980; Dolby, English, & Warren, 1982). In terms of minority groups, advocates maintain that replacing "inappropriate" parental beliefs about education and learning with those of mainstream culture will, in the long run, positively affect the child's school performance.

However, a note of caution concerning such "parent education" should be voiced. A growing number of researchers question if it is only parents' ideas that need

changing (e.g., Goodnow, 1984b). By exclusively focussing upon ways of altering parents' belief systems, some fear that an implicit message of intolerance is being conveyed (i.e., that the dominant culture's values and beliefs are intrinsically "correct" and all other value systems which deviate from this norm must be rejected). Such a position reflects an assimilationist policy, with little respect for cultural differences. When designing an intervention which is aimed to reduce misunderstandings stemming from differing belief systems between the home and school, it is important to consider both sides of the equation. Beliefs, attitudes and value systems of educators must also be investigated: How do they vary from parents' beliefs and expectations? Ultimately the issue would seem to be how each "side" can come to appreciate and collaborate with the other. The present research is designed to explore the similarities and differences in the belief systems of teachers and ethnic parents of young adolescents, to provide the necessary groundwork for facilitating such collaboration. The next section reviews some of the relevant work done on this problem of home-school collaboration, finally focussing on the central topic of homework.

Improving Home-School Relations

Recently attention has been focussed upon bridging the traditional gap which exists between the domains of the home and the school. A widely recognized need has emerged among

investigators to find and promote effective ways of forging meaningful links between the school and larger community, particularly parents (Tizard, Schofield & Hewison, 1982; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Lightfoot, 1979). It is generally agreed that a more cohesive home-school relationship yields substantial benefits for the child, specifically in the cognitive-affective realms of functioning (Wolfendale, 1983). Responses from educational surveys indicate that both parents and teachers perceive home-school collaboration in a favorable light, with potential benefits including improved basic skills, better motivation for learning and general enrichment for students, as well as improved parental self-image due to school involvement (Becker & Epstein, 1982).

In reality, the practice of collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers has been impeded by the traditional barriers of misunderstanding which divide the two sides. Lightfoot (1979) maintains that teachers hold a predetermined notion that a certain proportion of parents exist (particularly in the low SES and ethnic ranks) who are simply not interested in their children's schooling and educational process. A large-scale teacher survey involving over 600 public schools reveals that many educators harbor mixed feelings concerning parental involvement, proclaiming that parents lack sufficient skills to effectively collaborate with them in the educational process (Becker & Epstein, 1982). On the other hand, parents frequently

express feelings of uncertainty about intruding into school life. Ignorant of routines and curriculum and intimidated by school personnel, a number of parents avoid contact with their children's school as much as possible (Green,1969; Sharp & Green, 1975). In home learning situations, the Newsons (Newson & Newson, 1977) note that many parents, particularly in the working classes, are intimidated by modern teaching techniques in the schools, and express fear of helping the child the 'wrong way'.

A number of intervention projects aimed at fostering the development of positive home-school relations have been attempted, with generally encouraging results. Smith (cited by Bronfenbrenner, 1979) designed a research project to improve the school performance of low income minority children in the elementary grades. This large-scale effort involved approximately 1,000 children from low SES, mostly black, families and sought to confront the problem of underachievement from a multidimensional perspective involving the collaboration of parents and teachers. The project's primary objective was to bring together the child's significant others - the parent and teacher - as partners in the child's learning process. It was argued that neither could successfully perform this job in opposition to the other, or in isolation.

The initial step involved organizing a core group of 30 volunteer mothers, each of whom assumed a leadership role in

their designated neighborhood area. These volunteer leaders actively appealed to other mothers, promoting awareness of minority problems in education, and inviting parents to attend community meetings where they could discuss the education of their children, and learn how they could assist their children's progress in school. Thus, the meetings served as public forums where parents could air their concerns, as well as parent education classes where local elementary teachers spoke to parents about the importance of their involvement in the learning process. Parents were urged to create a conducive environment for learning and completing homework, and to help their children with school-related activities. In addition, an in-service program for teachers was implemented which emphasized the socio-cultural factors involved in the problems of minority children, aiming to dispel the notion that the cause was wholly academic in nature.

The intervention proved highly succesful, with significant gains on tests of reading achievement occuring among the experimental group (i.e., children of parents who participated in the educational meetings). As well, parents reported feeling more comfortable talking to teachers and being more positive about their children's schooling in general.

Several provocative British initiatives in school-community relations have also gained considerable recognition. For

instance, the Newham Parents' Centre in London operates as a self-help organization, providing an active program of parent support in local education. Among its various services, the Centre offers support and information to parents regarding educational and community issues, a day care centre for young children, and career advice for parents. The Centre's combined mandate of parent education and community provision has received wide-spread approval (Newham Parents' Centre Annual Report, 1981).

The Govan Project (Wilkinson & Williamson, 1980) represents another successful British initiative in home-school relations, aimed to stimulate parental interest in the education and development of their children. In this three year action-research project, parental involvement in the educational process was initiated in various practical ways, with the underlying objective of forging direct links between parents and their children's schools. In their final report, the authors express the need for greater community involvement in curriculum development, as well as increased participation and control of the educational process. Focussing upon parents, they advocate a collaborative, meaningful partnership between home and school, with active parental participation in all spheres of school life (Wilkinson & Williamson, 1980).

Clearly, the term "parental involvement" encompasses a wide spectrum of activities, from school-based volunteer programs

to participation on governing councils. For the purpose of this research however, I narrow my scope to one crucial aspect of the home-school interaction - the study of parental support and assistance in academic activities in the home. Becker and Epstein (1982) assert that the supervision of learning activities at home may represent the parental involvement strategy which is the most directly beneficial to the child. While PTA committees and parent volunteer programs typically affect a limited number of families, the fostering of more effective parental involvement in the learning situation would potentially benefit all children (Becker & Epstein, 1982).

Focussing specifically on the home context, Tizard (Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982) initiated a project to assess the effects of parental involvement in the teaching of reading. In randomly selected classrooms, a home reading program based on the collaboration of parents and teachers was implemented, where pre-school children were regularly heard reading at home from school-assigned books. Results showed that children who received extra home practice improved significantly in reading skills in comparison with control groups who were not involved in the parent-teacher collaboration.

The conclusions which Tizard draws from this experiment carry compelling implications for further work in this domain. First, she advocates the possibility of involving

all parents in formal educational activities, even in multiracial schools where parents are not English-speaking. Results from the study indicate that children of all groups who received parental help obtained significantly higher levels of reading attainment than those whose parents were not involved. Although some participating parents could not themselves read English, this fact did not hinder the significant improvements discerned in their children. Second, the author notes that this collaboration between parents and teachers yielded positive results at all levels or performance. Thus all children, regardless of ability, could benefit. Third, both parents and teachers who participated in the collaboration project described the experience as extremely positive and worthwhile. Parents reported greater satisfaction at being actively involved in the learning process, while teachers perceived children of participating parents as more motivated towards learning and better behaved in the classroom. As well, Tizard maintains that the collaborative effort opened lines of communication between parent and teacher, thereby promoting a greater degree of mutual understanding and cooperation (Tizard et al., 1982).

It is evident that the issue of parental participation in homework learning situations holds promise. However, there is a notable lack of research in this area, particularly dealing with parents of older students, and especially adolescents.

Recent research clearly supports the contention that homework has a positive impact on children's academic achievement. A large scale study by the National Center for Educational Statistics (cited by Strother, 1984) revealed a strong correlation between time spent on homework and school achievement. Keith (1982) looked at the data of over 20,000 high school seniors from the NCES study, and controlled for race, family background, SES status, intellectual ability, time spent on homework and high school grades. Results indicated that while ability had the greatest effect on grades, the amount of time spent on homework also significantly influenced scholastic achievement. Furthermore, the research findings suggested that more time spent on homework is associated with higher achievement, as measured by grades, at all levels of ability (Keith, 1982) even after all other variables were controlled. Austin (cited by Strother, 1984) reviewed the effects of homework on mathematics performance among students in grades four to ten. Findings further supported the position that school achievement is significantly influenced by time spent on homework. Research by Etzioni revealed a relationship between amount of time spent on homework and teachers' interest in their students. He noted that homework "...both encourages and measures the development of self-discipline and associated good working habits." (cited by Strother,1984, p.52). In another survey using a large American sample, Wolf (1979) found that the amount of

homework and the total amount of study represented the best predictors of achievement, in and out of the classroom.

In a recent large-scale study of science achievement in the United States, Walberg (1984) discovered that hours spent on homework served as a better predictor of science performance than ability, motivation, home environment, gender or number of science courses taken. The author concludes that:

> Amount of homework (over all subjects) was a strong independent predictor so that an increase of one hour of homework per night was associated with an increase of...over one-third of the standard deviation... on the science achievement measure. In other words, a student at the 50th percentile could improve to the 65th percentile (a worthwhile improvement) through increasing homework by one hour per night. (Walberg, 1984, p.137)

In the Canadian context, little research on the effects of homework has been done to date. One recent Ontario-based study discovered a significant link between amount of homework assigned and mathematics achievement (Raphael, Wahlstrom & Wolfe, 1986). Schroeder (Schroeder, Crawford, & Wright, 1971) investigated the study habits of Grade 6 students in Toronto, and also found that doing more homework was associated with better results. A recent study of Ontario high school students by King (1986) revealed a positive relationship between average grades and amount of homework done.

Given the considerable evidence in support of the value of homework, it seems reasonable to focus upon this topic, and to probe both the attitudes which parents and teachers hold

regarding homework activities, as well as the extent of support they provide around this issue. The present research is designed with this topic as its focus. In the following section, the literature on variations in parenting styles, and their relationship to tutoring practices, is reviewed. This is followed by a description of the theoretical rationale for this focus on parental tutoring, based on the developmental model of cognitive skill acquisition proposed by Vygotsky (1978).

Parenting Practices and Cognitive Development

In contemporary literature, Diana Baumrind emerges as the most influential researcher in the area of variations in child-rearing styles (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). Baumrind has designed a widely used classification of parenting styles, distinguishing between three prototypes: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. She describes the permissive parent as "attempting to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant and affirmative manner toward the child's impulses, desires and actions" (Baumrind, 1971, p.23). This type of adult avoids the exercise of control, allowing the child to regulate his/her own activities as much as possible. In contrast, the authoritarian parent is defined as "attempting to shape, control and evaluate behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct" (p. 22). Obedience is highly valued as a virtue

and punitive, forceful methods are frequently used to restrain the child's self-will. For the authoritarian parent, the maintenance of order and traditional structure are regarded as important ends in themselves.

Baumrind views the authoritative parenting style as an effective synthesis of responsiveness and control. This parent

> attempts to direct the child's activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner. Both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity are valued by authoritative parents; they affirm the child's present qualities but also set standards for further conduct. They use reason, power and shaping by regime and reinforcement to achieve objectives (Baumrind 1973, p.13).

In studies of early and middle childhood (some of them longitudinal), findings clearly indicate that the authoritative style is associated with more positive development in both the social and cognitive spheres of development (Baumrind, 1971, 1973). Children of authoritative parents are most self-reliant, self-controlled, exploratory and content in relation to children of the other two parenting groups (Baumrind, 1971). Authoritative childrearing was clearly associated with higher levels of social responsibility, achievement orientation and independence in children (Baumrind, 1973). In contrast, the children of permissive parents, who allowed children autonomy in decision making and made few demands for impulse control and maturity, were typically impulsive, aggressive and lacking in social responsibility and

independence (Baumrind, 1971).

A number of studies clearly support Baumrind's conclusions. Authoritarian parenting was associated with lower levels in children's moral judgements (Hoffman, 1970), low self-esteem (Loeb et al., 1980), as well as diminished levels of empathy (Feshbach, 1975). Drawing attention to an older age group, Kandel and Lesser (1972) found that adolescents in the United States and Denmark reported greater autonomy and general satisfaction in both cultures when parents used rational explanations and employed a democratic style of decision-making, similar to the authoritative pattern. Similarly, Pulkkinen's findings (1982) indicate that the child-centred guidance closely associated with authoritative parenting reduced indicators of deviance in youth, such as drinking, truancy and legal convictions. In a study of adolescents and family control, Dornbusch et al. (1985) discovered that children of parents who relinquished all decision-making power (permissive groups) were more likely to display deviant behavior than families who practiced "joint" decision-making between parent and adolescent (the more authoritative style).

Clearly, the literature supports the contention that particular parenting styles are associated with certain child behaviors. However, the majority of this research has focussed within a single culture; cross-cultural work on parenting styles has been scarce. Kandel and Lesser's

(1972) comparison between Danish and American youth is one of the few studies which tap the parenting variable across nations. Results suggest that parents of Danish youth practice more "authoritative" parenting than their American counterparts, with less arbitrary rules and more joint decision-making. Baumrind's (1973) own findings revealed some sharp inconsistencies when the data for black families were considered. Unlike patterns found among white children, the black daughters of authoritarian parents were assessed as being very independent and at ease in the school setting (Baumrind, 1973). Baumrind hypothesizes that authoritarian practices are consistent with the social norms of middle-class black families, and thus the child responds to this interaction style differently than would a white Anglo child.

These studies indicate evidence of at least some cultural differences in the area of "parenting styles". One aspect of the present research will involve exploring further this link between parenting style and culture. With regard to parental interaction with children in the context of academic, school-related activities, few studies have investigated possible associations between parenting styles and parent teaching practices. A vast literature supports the premise that maternal differences in teaching style and language in early childhood play an important role in the socialization of class-linked differences in children's school readiness (e.g., Bernstein, 1971; Hess & Shipman,

1967; Newson & Newson, 1977). However, few of these studies have included a parental style construct in their designs. Some recent work by Pratt, Kerig, Cowan and Cowan (1988) is shedding light on the relationship between parenting styles and parents' tutoring practices. Their findings suggest that parental authoritativeness, as defined by Baumrind, is linked to specific patterns of parent-child interaction in tutoring which are more effective than the other parenting styles in socializing cognitive competence.

Recently, an interesting study by Dornbusch (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leideman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987) has provided new insight regarding the purported link between parenting styles and cognitive achievement. In this research, Dornbusch extends Baumrind's typology of family processes to the context of adolescent school performance across several cultural groups, probing the extent to which the typology is maintained across an ethnically diverse sample. Over 7,000 high school students completed a questionnaire which probed their perceptions of parenting style (i.e., parental attitudes, behaviors and family communication patterns) as well as their academic achievement through self-reported grades. Responses from white, Hispanic, Asian and black students were analyzed. Overall findings revealed a clear association between grades and parenting style across all cultural groups and social classes: adolescents of permissive and authoritarian parents received significantly lower grades than students who described their parents as

more authoritative in decision-making. The authoritarian parenting type emerged as most predictive, with a higher relation to grades than the other two styles. However, cultural differences played an important role in the strength of these correlations. For example, the predictive association between parenting types and grades was weakest across the Asian group, where only authoritarian parenting was significantly related to school achievement. Among Hispanics, an interaction of gender and authoritarian parenting emerged. Daughters of authoritarian parents were significantly lower in achievement, whereas almost no relation between this parenting style and grades was revealed among males. Dornbusch speculates that this gender difference reflects cultural variations in expectations between males and females in the Hispanic families.

Vygotsky's Concept of Cognitive Development

Before reviewing further work concerning tutoring styles, it is important to consider the theoretical framework which underlies this line of research. An important thinker in the area of cognitive development was the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, whose ideas provide some of the groundwork for contemporary educational research.

Vygotsky perceived the process of socialization as playing a key role in the development of cognitive competencies in

children. He viewed cognitive development as a process of "gradual internalization", maintaining that:

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice on two planes. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 163)

Thus, Vygotsky postulated that all higher cognitive processes are originally social processes shared between people, particularly between children and adults. The child first experiences problem-solving activities in the presence of others, who control and guide these tasks. Through a gradual process of internalizing the cognitive functions expressed by the interacting adult, the child comes to perform these functions independently (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara & Campione, 1983). According to Vygotsky, any higher mental function necessarily passes through this external or "social" stage in its development. The adult tutor serves the child as a "vicarious form of consciousness" until a level of independent mastery of the task is achieved (Bruner, 1985).

From the Vygotskian perspective, the parent plays a crucial role in the development of children's cognitive abilities. In order to fully develop these competencies, the adult must arrange the environment to allow the child to reach a higher or more abstract level from which to reflect. Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) reflects this crucial social component in learning. The ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as

determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). For Vygotsky, all learning of value for the child's development must occur in this ZPD, and all effective adult tutoring must rely on the use of this zone. It is crucial for the adult tutor to constantly tailor or "scaffold" the learning task in accordance with the child's changing level of competence, to enable the child to internalize external knowledge, and to attain independent control (Bruner, 1985). "Scaffolding" refers to the process in which the parent or older person supports and advances the child's behavior through a collaboration of external and internal structures (Vygotsky, 1978). It represents a tutoring practice which is sensitive to the learner's changing needs as he or she progresses, involving the gradual relinquishing of adult control to the child. Scaffolding helps children to participate in cognitive activities long before they are capable of sustaining these activities independently.

The Vygotskian concept of "scaffolding" has received considerable recent attention from researchers in the area of early child development (Bruner, 1985; Collins, 1984; Fischer & Bullock, 1984). Fischer and Bullock (1984) distinguish between "scaffolding" and more Piagetian "support" processes, and suggest that both play an important role in socializing cognitive skills. While scaffolding

refers to adult assistance which guides the child in the early stages of learning, "support" denotes simply rearranging the environment to permit highest achievement at the child's current level of development (Collins, 1984). In the context of parental assistance with school-related activities, both processes may be significant. The extent to which parents employ both scaffolding and support strategies may determine the amount of impact they have on the child's school progress, and it is expected that the degree of use of these strategies will vary among parents.

Recently, some attention has been paid to individual differences in the use of effective scaffolding techniques by parents. Wood (1980) noted significant differences between mothers as they assisted preschoolers in copying a block model. Tutoring behavior varied in two ways: 1) how often mothers remained in the child's "region of sensitivity" (similar to Vygotsky's ZPD conception) and 2) the extent to which the child's success/failure would elicit a contingent shift in the mother's level of intervention. Further studies by Pratt et al. (1988) found evidence of differences in parental tutoring styles along these dimensions for both mothers and fathers. As noted earlier, results also suggest a relationship between these two tutoring styles and the level of parental authoritativeness, as rated by independent observers (Pratt et al., 1988).

Green (1987) investigated the relationship between parenting

style and parental instruction, specifically in the context of homework-like tasks. The study involved 14 mother-child dyads, with children's ages ranging from nine to eleven years. In the pretest phase, children attempted to solve long-division math problems. Parents were shown a copy of these math questions, and were asked to estimate their children's ability to correctly solve them. Parenting style was measured by an interview and questionnaire session, whereby mothers were ranked along Baumrind's dimensions of authoritarian, permissive and authoritative. In the next phase, mothers were requested to assist their children with long-division math problems, and these instructional sessions were tape-recorded and coded. Finally, a posttest was conducted on which children solved similar math problems, independent of external help. Results of the study were mixed. While children of mothers who were better tutors in a scaffolding sense achieved higher scores on the posttest (as expected), the main hypothesis which linked authoritative parenting with more effective tutoring and more accurate judgements of children's abilities was not supported. Nonetheless, the study provides valuable insight about school-related tasks and parent teaching behavior, and may generate further work in the area.

Our present area of interest invclves the extent to which the home environment encourages and supports school-related activities, and the manner in which this support is translated into actions. While a number of studies have

explored the young child's environment and the extent of school-like activities initiated by parents prior to formal schooling (e.g., Newson & Newson, 1977), very little research has dealt with parental support of school-based tasks for the older child. Studies involving pre-schoolers show that children of parents who actively promote and teach school-like activities, particularly reading, are better prepared to cope with academic demands in the future. Hess, Price and Dickson (1980) found that children's facility with reading is related to the extent of earlier direct tutoring by parents. As well, findings suggest that the style of parent-child interaction in tutoring situations significantly affects the child's future school performance. Children of mothers who pose questions which compel their children to employ higher levels of cognitive functioning (e.g.,"why" questions) have better letter knowledge and math ability in kindergarten and first grade than their counterparts whose parents are less demanding in their queries (e.g., Sigel, 1982).

Upon reviewing the literature, it is evident that many questions concerning parental and teacher beliefs about education remain unexplored. What specific differences exist between attitudes of home and school regarding learning and homework? How do beliefs and practices around these issues vary among different cultural groups? In what ways are different parenting styles associated with these beliefs and practices, as well as with the amount of contact

and involvement parents maintain with their child's school? The present research investigates these key issues by gathering relevant information from parents of early adolescents from three cultural backgrounds, as well as the teachers of these children.

Orienting Expectations

The term "orienting expectations" rather than "hypotheses" is used to describe the exploratory nature of this study. The expected relationships are quite broad in scope, suggesting general patterns emerging between variables, rather than specific predictions.

1) It is expected that parenting style will be significantly associated with tutoring practices (i.e., help and support of child's homework) and patterns of school relations across ethnic groups. For instance, the "authoritative" parent is predicted to maintain a higher degree of involvement with her child's education in all facets (i.e., more contact and better relationship with school, more emphasis on parent as teacher, higher value placed on homework, more effective helping practices, better knowledge about and prediction of the child's performance).

2) Ethnic differences are expected to emerge in parenting styles, homework practices and parental belief systems. For instance, it is expected that authoritarian parenting will

be more typical of the East Indian and Greek parents than the Anglo group.

3) It is expected that teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning education and homework issues will reveal greater discrepancies with the views of East Indian and Greek parents than with those of Anglo parents. In particular, teachers and Anglo parents are expected to show more agreement in their beliefs about attributions for school performance, education and learning, homework and parental involvement, and contact with the school.

Method

Participants

A total of 36 parents of Grade 7 and 8 students and 12 junior high teachers participated in the study. Three ethnic groups were investigated: Greek, East Indian and Anglo. Twelve parents were recruited from each group, with equal numbers of sons and daughters in these groups. Parent participation was restricted to individuals who had attained at least a basic level of English, and were able to communicate in the language. Each parent was mailed a letter of introduction describing the objectives and procedures of the study, as well as a consent form which emphasized complete confidentiality of responses and

described the feedback process. Families were recruited from the Grade 7 and 8 population of a junior high school located in metropolitan Toronto. The school was selected on the basis of its culturally diversified student population. The participating families were matched as closely as possible on the basis of parental education, in an effort to control for this factor. The mean educational level attained by the parent sample was grade 10. Parents were drawn from a single urban neighborhood which was described as "low-middle class". Socio-economic status was constant across parent groups. Twenty five per cent of the sample were single parents, and these were represented fairly evenly across the three groups. All parents from the Greek and East Indian samples had been born and educated in their homelands. The difficulty of defining "Anglo" origin in Canada's multicultural society was clearly recognized. In order to obtain this sample, parents with Anglicized surnames were selected who were born and educated in Canada. It is important to recognize that all individuals, including those of "Anglo" background, are members of ethnic groups. Thus, the term "ethnic group" will not be used in reference to non-Anglo parents. Rather, the Greek and East Indian groups will be referred to as minority parents in this study.

The teacher participants were recruited from the pool of 7th and 8th grade teachers at the same school. Teachers were all born and educated in Canada. They were also provided

Measures

Parents participated in a one hour structured interview, which took place at their homes. The interview consisted of the following subparts: 1) Parenting Styles 2) Parent Beliefs about Education and Learning 3) Homework Issues 4) Attributions for Learning 5) Contact and Involvement with the School, and 6) Math Prediction Task. In addition, parents completed a Family Communication Questionnaire, adapted from Dornbusch et al. (1987), to measure parenting style in another format.

Teachers participated in a 30 minute interview, which involved the following components: 1) Parenting Styles 2) Beliefs about Education and Learning 3) Homework Issues 4) Attributions for Learning, and 5) Teacher-Parent Contact.

A more detailed description of each measure is provided below, and the complete interview is shown in Appendix A.

Parenting Styles (adapted from Dornbusch et al., 1985). Parents were asked about family decision-making practices concerning eight varied child-related issues (e.g., choosing friends, choosing clothes,. For each item, parents reported whether the issue is decided by: a) parent alone b) child alone or c) both parents and child.

According to Dornbusch et al. (1985), Chronbach's alpha was Parent Alone = .69, Youth Alone = .63, Joint = .69, for his questionnaire version of a similar item set.

Scoring: The number of items decided by child alone with no discussion (permissive), by parents alone with no discussion (authoritarian) and by both child and parent with discussion (authoritative) was calculated.

Teachers were asked to report how an ideal parent should handle decision-making around these same issues. Teacher's scores were obtained in the same manner as scores from parents.

Family Communication Questionnaire (adapted from Dornbusch et al., 1987). Parents were given a short nine-item questionnaire to complete. They were asked to read several statements about family communication and indicate their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale.

Scoring: Items include three 'permissive', three 'authoritative' and three 'authoritarian' type statements. Each respondent has scores on all three measures (possible range 3-15).

Beliefs about Education and Learning (adapted from Bountrogianni, 1987). This component consisted of six

Beliefs about Education and Learning (adapted from Bountrogianni, 1987). This component consisted of six open-ended questions tapping various attitudes and values concerning education and learning (e.g., role of parent and teacher in children's learning, importance of parental involvement in learning). Both parents and teachers were asked these questions.

Scoring: Responses were summarized and content-analyzed for six categories, induced from the data. Reliability is discussed below.

Homework Issues (Adapted from Pratt and Bountrogianni, 1987). This measure involved seven open-ended questions which probe attitudes, beliefs and practices concerning homework issues and parental involvement with home learning. Both parents and teachers were asked to respond to these questions.

Scoring: Responses were summarized and content-analyzed by seven categories, induced from the data set. Reliability is discussed below.

Attributions for Learning. This portion of the interview involved asking parents about their children's achievement in six subject areas at school and the extent to which they attributed these outcomes to: a) effort b) ability c) school/teacher factors and d) help from home. As well,

teachers were asked what factor they believe exerts the most influence on an average child's performance in these subject areas.

Scoring: The two most influential response categories were selected for each subject area. These were then totalled across the six subjects, and each participant was assigned an average rank for each of the four factors.

Contact/Involvement with School. This section consisted of six open-ended questions, including the frequency and type of school contact, degree of involvement with the child's school, perceptions of the home-school relationship and suggestions for improvement. Teachers were asked six open-ended questions, including frequency of contact with parents, beliefs about parental contact and perceived relationship with parents.

Scoring: Responses were analysed for frequencies and for content by categories. Reliability is discussed below.

Prediction Task. Parents were shown a copy of the math portion of the Wide Range Achievement Test and were asked to predict their child's correct or incorrect response to each item set, based on knowledge of their child's current skill levels.

Scoring: The parents' predictions of number of correct

items were compared with their children's actual performance.

Reliability of Coding

Two independent scorers, the author and her advisor, categorized 12 interview protocols separately. Reliability was established by calculating the coefficient of agreement between them. For beliefs about education, this was .74. For homework attitudes and system, this was .75. For school contact, it was .95. Parenting style, attribution and locus of control and the prediction task were all objective measures which essentially produced perfect agreement. The coding of the author was used for all data analyses.

Entry Issues

In an initial meeting, the principal of the selected junior high school expressed great interest in the study, and a willingness to participate. He was quite positive about the potential benefits of the research, maintaining that an investigation of teacher and parent belief systems about education and learning could promote greater understanding and more meaningful communication between the two spheres. The principal then contacted the Superintendant of the associated Board of Education to convey his interest in the study and to inquire about the official Board procedure concerning research proposals.

The next step involved mailing a formal research application to the Research Department at the East York Board of Education. The proposal was approved through the Board.

Procedure

The parent interview process took place in the participants' homes. Upon completion of the one hour session, the objectives and implications of the study were fully explained to parents and they were given the opportunity to voice any questions or concerns which they might have concerning the research. The issue of confidentiality was also discussed, and parents were assured that their anonymity would be preserved. In addition, participants were promised a summary of results which was mailed at the completion of the study (see Appendix F).

The teacher interviews were conducted in the school setting. Upon completion of the interview, participants were fully informed of the objectives and implications of the research, and were asked to discuss any questions or concerns about the study. The issue of confidentiality of responses was also discussed in the debriefing phase.

Both parent and teacher interviews were taped, transcribed and coded. Children of participating parents were required to complete the math portion of the WRAT in class. Results

from students of participating parents were compared with parents' predictions. A summary of findings and recommendations was mailed to the school staff upon completion of the study (see Appendix F). Further feedback sessions with teachers are under discussion.

Results

Ethnic and Sex Variations in Responses

Parenting style: Interview measures. Three dependent variables were constructed as measures of Baumrind's parenting style types from the eight decision-making questions asked of parents and teachers in the interviews. Total items decided by child alone (Permissive), parent alone (Authoritarian) and jointly (Authoritative) were obtained. Two-way Ethnic Group (4) x Sex (2) ANOVAs were conducted for each of the three parenting style variables. The ethnic group variable included Anglo, Greek and Indian parent groups, as well as the teacher group. Table 1 shows the means for these analyses. For permissiveness, there was a significant main effect of Ethnic Group, $F(3,40) = 3.09$, $p < .05$. Teachers were least permissive and Anglo parents were most (see Table 1). No other effects were significant. For authoritarian parenting, there was also a main effect of Ethnic Group, $F(3,40) = 8.32$, $p < .01$. Teachers were lowest and the two minority groups were highest (see Table 1). No other effects were significant. For authoritative parenting, a strong main effect of Ethnic Group was revealed, $F(3,40) = 12.22$, $p < .01$. Teachers were much more authoritative than the parent groups. Anglo parents were somewhat higher on authoritativeness than were minority group parents (see Table 1).

Parenting style: Questionnaire measures. Two-way

Ethnic Group (3) x Sex (2) ANOVAS were used for each of the 3 parenting style questionnaire variables. Ethnic groups in this analysis included only the Anglo, Greek and East Indian parent groups. The means of these analyses are displayed in Table 2. For permissiveness, no significant effects were revealed. For authoritative parenting, there was a main effect of Ethnic group $F(2,28)=2.78$, $p < .05$, and an effect of sex, $F(1,28)=4.60$, $p < .05$. Anglo parents were higher on the authoritative measure than the other two parenting groups. As well, parents of boys revealed a more authoritative parenting style than parents of girls, Ms = 10.5, 7.4 . No other main effects were significant. For authoritarian parenting, a main effect of Ethnic group was found, $F(2,28)=7.14$, $p < .01$. Anglo parents were much less authoritarian than minority group parents (See Table 2). No other effects were significant.

Table 1 Parenting Styles: Ethnic Group Means for Interview Measure

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
Permissive*	3.58	2.92	2.67	1.92	2.77
Authoritarian*	1.67	2.92	3.08	0.83	2.13
Authoritative*	2.75	2.17	2.25	5.25	3.10

Table 2 Parenting Styles: Ethnic Group Means for Questionnaire Measure

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
Permissive	5.83	6.09	5.72	-------	5.88
Authoritarian *	7.50	10.54	11.18	-------	9.74
Authoritative *	13.50	12.54	12.09	-------	12.71

* significant group differences, $p < .05$

Parental influence on learning. Beliefs about the role and influence of the home in children's learning were explored. From the parent's interview responses, six influence "models" were abstracted for coding. These included: 1) Stimulating Environment model 2) Behavioral model (i.e., applying rewards and punishments and pressure) 3) Affective model (i.e., being positive and encouraging interest) 4) Social Learning model (i.e., setting an example and using modelling) 5) Discussion model (i.e., discussing the importance of education) and 6) Direct Guidance model (i.e., assisting the child with academic and career decisions). Two-way Ethnic Group (4) by Sex (2) ANOVAs were conducted on the extent of mention of each of these models by parents (more than one model could be coded for each parent). Although such data are usually tested by chi-square, the analysis of variance procedure allows us to test easily for interactions with child gender and has been shown to be quite appropriate to such applications. Consequently it is used throughout these analyses.

For the Stimulating Environment model, a significant main effect of Ethnic group was revealed, $F(3,40)= 3.64$, $p < .05$. Generally, teachers discussed the importance of a stimulating environment significantly more than did parents (see Table 3). No other effects were significant. For the Behavioral model, there was another group main effect,

$F(3,40) = 3.04$, $p < .05$. The teacher group mentioned the role of parental pressure and control significantly less than did parents (see Table 3). No other significant effects were revealed. With the Affective model, there was a significant main effect of Ethnic Group, $F(3,40) = 3.85$, $p < .05$. eachers discussed the importance of positive encouragement the most, while Greek parents were least likely to mention this model (see Table 3). There were no other significant effects. A strong group main effect was found for the Social Learning model, $F(3,40) = 11.47$, $p < .01$, with teachers and Anglo parents both noting the importance of modelling behaviors for children significantly more than the ethnic groups (see Table 3). Other effects were not significant. For the Discussion model, no significant differences were revealed. Similarly, the Guidance model yielded no significant effects (see Table 3). In terms of total responses, teachers and Anglo parents referred to a greater number of these different models in their interviews $F(3,40) = 4.86$, $p < .01$. (see Table 3).

Finally, the role of the home and school were compared in terms of relative influence in children's learning. No significant sex or ethnic group effects were revealed. School was regarded as holding greater influence and responsibility for learning by both parents and teachers (M = 2.68 overall, of 3.00 possible).

Role of parent education and family background.

Two-way Ethnic Group (4) x Sex (2) ANOVAs were applied to parents' beliefs about parent education and reports of own family educational background. Attitudes toward parent education yielded no significant effects by sex or ethnic group (see Table 4). Parents' own family backgrounds revealed a significant finding, however. There was a main effect of ethnic group $F(2,30) = 5.63$, $p < .01$, with East Indian parents reporting that their own parents emphasized education more than families of the other two parent groups (see Table 4). There were no other significant effects. In terms of their own parents' reported assistance with homework, no differences were found between parents by child gender or by ethnicity.

Table 3 Beliefs about Parental Influence, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
Stimulating Environment *	17%	25%	17%	67%	32%
Behavioral *	42%	67%	50%	08%	42%
Affective *	50%	50%	17%	83%	50%
Soc.Learning *	92%	50%	08%	83%	58%
Discussion	25%	08%	17%	00%	13%
Guidance	08%	00%	08%	08%	06%
Total Number *	2.33	2.00	1.17	2.50	2.00
Home vs School Influence	2.83	2.58	2.67	2.66	2.68

(Scale: 3 = All School 2 = Both 1 = All Home)

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

Table 4 Role of Parent Education and Family Background, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
Parent Education Classes	2.58	2.58	2.17	2.42	2.44
(Scale: 3 = Positive 2 = Mixed Feelings 1 = Negative)					
Family Stress * on Education	50%	100%	50%	----	67%
Family Help with Homework	1.42	1.75	1.17	----	1.40
(Scale: 3 = Considerable 2 = A Little 1= None)					

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

Homework beliefs. Two-way Ethnic Group (4) x Sex (2) ANOVAs were conducted on reports of homework strategies and beliefs. A significant main effect of Group was revealed, $F(3,40) = 3.45$, $p < .01$, when parents and teachers were asked how much they believed parents in the area helped their children with homework. Teachers and Anglo parents perceive a lesser degree of parental help and involvement than do ethnic parents. Teachers' estimates regarding parental assistance with homework were the lowest (see Table 5). Other effects were not significant. The question "should parents help with homework?" yielded a highly significant main effect of Ethnic Group, $F(3,40) = 10.86$, $p < .01$, with ethnic groups considerably more in favor of helping with children's homework than teachers and Anglo parents (see Table 5). There were no other effects. For the amount of parental help which should be provided, another group main effect was revealed, $F(3,40) = 9.10$, $p < .01$. Teachers favor a significantly lower amount of parental help than do all groups of parents (see Table 5). No other effects were significant. When the parents only were asked how often they actually help, no significant effects were found for ethnic group or child gender (see Table 5).

Parental feelings regarding homework were analyzed next. Regarding the value of homework, a strong main effect of Ethnic Group was revealed $F(2,29) = 10.61$, $p < .01$. Ethnic parents place a much higher value on homework than do Anglo

parents (see Table 8). No other significant effects were found. Regarding feelings about helping with homework, no significant effects of child gender or ethnic group emerged among parents (see Table 8). However, there was a significant difference between parental feelings around helping and teachers' perceptions of these feelings, $F(3,46) = 2.93$, $p < .01$. Teachers were more likely to perceive negative parental feelings around homework assistance than were parents themselves (see Table 8).

Typical homework practices. Parents and teachers were asked what type of math homework help they would provide for children. Six assistance techniques were identified from the interview responses, including: 1) Structuring/facilitating 2) Monitoring work 3) Controlling and maintaining discipline 4) Direct Tutoring 5) Providing solutions and 6) Referring child to school for help.

For the Structuring/facilitating method, there was a significant group main effect, $F(3,40) = 4.98$, $p < .01$. Teachers emphasized the importance of providing structure and resources much more than parents (see Table 5). No other effects were significant. The method of Monitoring work revealed no significant effects. Similarly, no effects were found for the Control technique (see Table 5). For the Direct Tutoring technique, there was a highly significant group main effect, $F(3,40) = 9.60$, $p < .01$. Teachers were least in favor of direct parental tutoring. No other

Table 5 Homework Help, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
Do Most *	1.50	2.17	2.17	1.08	1.73
Parents Help?					
(Scale: 3 = Regularly 2 = Sometimes 1 = Rarely)					
Amount Parents					
Should Help *	1.67	1.58	1.83	1.00	1.52
(Scale: 3 = More than once a week 2 = Once a week 1 = Only when needed)					
How Much Do					
You Help?	1.92	2.08	1.58	-----	1.86

Helping: Percentage Mentioning Each Type

Structure *	50%	25%	17%	83%	44%
Monitor	42%	42%	58%	67%	52%
Control	00%	00%	08%	08%	04%
Tutor *	67%	92%	75%	08%	60%
Solutions	17%	17%	17%	00%	13%
Refer to School	00%	08%	00%	08%	04%
Total	1.75	1.83	1.75	1.75	1.77

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

effects were significant (see Table 5). The method of providing solutions yielded no significant effects. As well, referring children to their school for help failed to show significant differences (see Table 5). For number of total responses, no significant effects were revealed between groups based on ethnic background or child gender.

Evidence on differences in the extent of structure and facilitation which parents provide with respect to their children's homework was explored with the usual Group (3) x Child Gender (2) ANOVAs; teachers were not included. In terms of delegating a special time to study, no significant differences were found between groups (see Table 8). Similarly, the provision of a special place to study in the home failed to reveal any significant effects (see Table 8). In terms of resources to facilitate children's home studies, a significant main effect of Ethnic Group emerged, $F(2,28) = 5.02$, $p < .05$. Anglo parents provided significantly more resources for their children than did the ethnic parent groups, particularly the Indian parents (see Table 8). No other effects were significant.

Problem techniques for homework. Techniques for dealing with children who are reluctant to study were explored in the interviews. Eight parental "strategies" were delineated in the interview responses. These included: 1) Structuring/facilitating 2) Monitoring work assignments

3) Controlling behavior 4) Direct tutoring 5) Providing solutions 6) Liaison with school 7) Discussing importance of education and 8) Perceiving the problem as the child's responsibility.

For the Structuring/facilitating technique, a significant main effect of ethnic group was found, $F(3,37) = 3.41$, $p < .05$. Teachers reported this strategy most, while it was little mentioned by parents (see Table 6). No other effects were significant. For Monitoring, there was another significant group main effect, $F(3,37) = 3.54$, $p < .05$. In the case of a child who is reluctant to study, teachers discussed the importance of checking work and policing the child significantly more than did the parents (see Table 6). No other significant effects were revealed. For the Control strategy, a main effect emerged, $F(3,37) = 3.15$, $p < .05$ (see Table 6). Greek parents reported the use of control and discipline more than other groups. No other significant effects were found. The Tutoring strategy revealed no significant differences among the groups. For Liaison with the school, a significant group main effect was found, $F(3,37) = 2.97$, $p < .05$, with teachers reporting the importance of this strategy more than parents (see Table 6). Discussing the importance of education with the child was a strategy which revealed no significant effects. Similarly, viewing schoolwork as the child's responsibility failed to yield significant differences among the groups. In terms of total responses, an effect approaching significance emerged,

$F(3,44) = 2.43$, $p < .10$. Teachers expressed the highest number of different strategies for dealing with unmotivated children (see Table 6).

Parents (but not teachers) were also asked how they handle their children when they feel frustrated with homework. For both the Structure/facilitate and Monitor techniques, no significant effects were revealed (see Table 6). A strong main effect of Ethnic group was found for the Control strategy, $F(2,28) = 5.10$, $p < .01$, with Greek parents reporting much greater use of direct control, pressure and discipline with their frustrated children than the other two parent groups (see Table 6). No other effects were significant. In the case of the Tutoring strategy, there was a significant main effect of Sex, $F(1,28) = 4.93$, $p < .05$. Parents of girls tutored their frustrated daughters more than did parents of boys, Ms = 1.22, 1.00. No other significant effects were found. The strategy of providing children with homework solutions when they expressed frustration failed to show any significant group differences (see Table 6). Forming a liaison and working with the school was a technique which revealed a significant main effect of Ethnic group, $F(2,28) = 4.17$, $p < .05$. Anglo parents employed this strategy with their frustrated children more than did the two other ethnic groups (see Table 6). Discussing the importance of education and homework did not reveal significant effects among the groups. (see Table 6). Anglo parents are somewhat more

likely to view children's studies as their own responsibility and would intervene less. However, the effects do not reach conventional levels of significance (see Table 6). No other effects were significant. A main effect of Ethnic Group was found when the total number of problem-solving responses was analyzed, $F(2,28) = 6.83$, $p < .01$. Anglo parents described a higher number of strategies than the other groups, particularly the Greek parents (see Table 6).

Responses to good and poor grades. Two-way Ethnic Group (4) x Gender (2) ANOVAs were conducted on parents' and teachers' reports of their responses to children's grades. In terms of dealing with children's good grades, all groups reported that praise was an appropriate response, and no significant differences were found (see Table 7). There was some tendency for ethnic parents to say that they would avoid overpraising the child and presumably "spoiling" him/her, although the effects did not reach conventional levels of significance (see Table 7). No other effects were significant. For rewards, a significant main effect of Ethnic Group emerged, $F(3,40) = 9.54$, $p < .0_$, with Greek parents most in favor of rewarding their successful children and Anglo parents and teachers the least likely to mention rewards (see Table 7). Other effects were not significant.

Regarding poor grades, there were no significant group or gender differences in the tendency for parents to punish,

Table 6 Problem Techniques for Homework, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
No Study:					
Structure *	25%	30%	09%	67%	33%
Monitor *	00%	10%	09%	42%	16%
Control *	42%	30%	82%	33%	47%
Tutor	17%	00%	00%	08%	07%
Solutions	00%	20%	00%	00%	04%
School Liaison *	00%	00%	00%	25%	07%
Discuss	25%	10%	09%	00%	18%
Child's Responsibility	25%	10%	09%	00%	11%
Total	1.33	1.10	1.27	1.83	1.40

* significant group differences, $p < .05$

Table 6 (continued)

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teachers	Mean
<u>Frustrated:</u>					
Structure	50%	55%	36%	-----	47%
Monitor	00%	00%	00%	-----	00%
Control *	08%	00%	45%	-----	18%
Tutor	08%	27%	00%	-----	12%
Solutions	00%	03%	00%	-----	03%
School Liaison *	42%	09%	00%	-----	18%
Discuss	17%	18%	00%	-----	12%
Child's Responsibility	25%	00%	00%	-----	09%
Total *	1.50	1.09	.75	-----	1.11

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

Table 7 Response to Children's Grades, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teacher	Mean
Good Grades:					
Praise	100%	92%	83%	100%	94%
Avoid Overpraise	00%	25%	33%	08%	17%
Reward *	25%	50%	83%	00%	40%
Poor Grades:					
Punish	08%	17%	17%	09%	13%
Positive Tone	58%	25%	25%	45%	38%
Correct *	00%	00%	00%	27%	06%
Diagnose *	42%	42%	17%	82%	45%
Threaten *	25%	35%	58%	00%	30%
School Liaison	17%	08%	00%	00%	06%

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

and this response was not very common overall. The importance of maintaining a positive tone in the case of poor results was discussed more by Anglo parents and teachers, although the overall group effects were nonsignificant (see Table 7). No other significant effects were found. Working together and correcting poor work was a strategy which yielded a significant group main effect, $F(3,39) = 4.25$, $p < .01$. Teachers mentioned this response significantly more than did parents (see Table 7). The strategy of diagnosing the problem also yielded significant main effects of group, $F(3,39) = 3.67$, $p < .05$. Teachers were most in favor of diagnosing a child's academic problems, while Greek parents noted this strategy the least (see Table 7). No other effects were significant. The use of threats and warnings in the case of bad grades also revealed significant group main effects, $F(3,39) = 3.23$, $p < .05$. Greek parents said they would threaten and warn their unsuccessful children more than the other groups (see Table 7). No other effects were significant.

Contact with the school. Parents reported on their contact with the school and feelings around this. These reports were analyzed as usual by Group (3) x Child Gender (2) ANOVAs. For overall frequency of parental contact per year, no significant effects were found. In terms of self-initiated contact, there was a main effect of sex, $F(1,26) = 4.78$, $p < .05$, with parents of girls initiating contact more with the school than parents of boys, Ms= 2.1,

Table 8 Homework System and Feelings about Homework, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teacher	Mean
Special Time	1.42	1.17	1.50	-----	1.36
Special Place	1.42	1.58	1.50	-----	1.47
Specific Resources *	2.92	2.08	2.42	-----	2.53
Feelings About HW	1.83	1.91	1.50	-----	1.74
Value of HW*	2.50	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.79
Feelings about Helping *	2.00	2.27	2.08	1.33	1.91

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

1.7 times per year, respectively. There were no significant ethnic group differences. For degree of comfort with contact, no significant effects were revealed (see Table 9). Similarily, ratings of importance of parent-school contact showed no effects. For amount of future contact, no significant effects were found. However, for discussion of homework issues with teachers, there was a significant main effect of Ethnic Group $F(2,29) = 3.70$, $p < .05$. Anglo parents felt that they discussed homework issues with teachers more frequently than did the ethnic parents (see Table 9). When asked about the usefulness of such discussions with teachers, significant effects were found (see Table 9).

Prediction. For the prediction of their child's WRAT score, a significant main effect of sex emerged, $F(1,27) = 5.68$, $p < .05$. Parents of boys predicted higher math scores (total number of problems that would be solved accurately) for their sons than did parents of girls, Ms= 32.6, 20.3. No other effects were significant. The actual math scores of the children failed to yield significant effects of either group or sex. However, parents' prediction accuracy revealed a highly significant main effect for child gender, $F(1,27) = 8.97$, $p < .01$. Parents of boys were worse predictors of their sons' performance than were parents of girls, Ms= 14.0, 7.0, undoubtedly due to the greater tendency to overpredict for boys, as noted. There were no

effects of ethnic group on prediction accuracy.

Attribution for school performance. Four general attribution variables were ranked in importance by parents and teachers as determinants of children's school performance in six different academic areas. They included: ability, effort, school/teacher factors and home factors. Respondents selected the two most important influences for each subject area, and then the total number of mentions of each variable (of 6 possible) was tabulated. For ability, no significant group or child gender effects were revealed. Greek parents attributed their children's school performance less to ability than the other groups, but this effect was not significant (see Table 11). For effort, there was an effect of group which approached significance. Greek parents perceive effort as a more important factor for school performance than do the other groups, $F(3,47) = 2.53$, $p < .10$ (see Table 11). No other effects were significant. The school-teacher factor yielded a highly significant main effect of group, $F(3,40) = 8.95$, $p < .01$, with teachers ranking the school/teacher variable much lower than parents in determining the child's school progress (see Table 11). No other significant effects were found. For the home factor, another strong group main effect was revealed, $F(3,40) = 7.07$, $p < .01$. Teachers attributed school progress more to the home than did parents. Greek parents noted the home factor the least (see Table 11). No other effects were significant.

Table 9 Parental Contact with School, Means by Ethnic Group

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Mean
Times/Year	2.50	2.33	2.00	2.28
Initiative	1.50	1.22	1.09	1.28
(Parent-initiated: 3 = more than 2x/year 2= 1x/year 1=never				
Comfort Level	2.33	2.44	2.27	2.34
(Scale: 3= Very comfortable 2= Somewhat 1= Uncomfortable				
Importance of Contact	2.58	2.89	2.91	2.78
(Scale: 3= Very important 2= Somewhat 1= Not important				
Future Contact	1.42	1.56	1.64	1.53
(Scale: 3= More contact 2= About the same 1= Less contact)				
Discuss * Homework Issues	2.67	1.67	1.91	2.13
(Scale: 3= Yes 2 = Sometimes, when needed 1 = Rarely/never)				
Useful to Discuss	2.17	2.42	2.27	2.29
(Scale: 3= Yes 2= Mixed 1= Not really)				

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

Table 10 Parents' Predictions of WRAT Mathematics Scores

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Mean
Prediction	23.45	31.82	30.91	28.73
WRAT Score	19.73	20.82	18.55	19.70
Difference	7.18	12.27	12.36	10.61

@ Table 11.Attribution for School Performance

	Anglo	E.Indian	Greek	Teacher	Mean
Ability	3.17	3.00	1.75	2.75	2.67
Effort	2.83	3.33	4.67	2.33	3.29
School/ Teacher*	4.33	4.00	3.67	1.17	3.29
Home *	1.67	1.33	.42	3.75	1.79

@ Some parents failed to select two items for each subject, so column totals do not equal 12

* significant group difference, $p < .05$

Parenting Style Patterns and Responses to School and Homework

The interview measures of the three parenting styles were used as primary indices for these analyses. Correlations between these scores and other measures were obtained within each of the three ethnic groups and then pooled to provide an overall estimate of the relationships between variables, independent of ethnic factors, since parenting style was associated with ethnicity. Where particular responses were infrequent across the various groups, correlations were not computed (see Tables 12 through 14). Since this produced an extensive number of correlations, some check on chance error rates for these correlations seems advisable. About 20% of the 168 correlations with parenting style were significant at the $p = .05$ level, well above chance expectancies (5%).

Correlations between interview and questionnaire measures of parenting style. The measures of the three parenting styles on the interview were correlated with the corresponding questionnaire indices, pooled across the three ethnic groups. Permissiveness as a style was significantly correlated on interview and questionnaire indices, pooled $r(30) = .43$, $p < .05$. Authoritativeness as a style was also correlated positively for the two measures, pooled $r(30) = .37$, $p < .05$. However, questionnaire and interview scores for authoritarian styles were not correlated, pooled $r(30) =$

.04.

Parental influence. The correlations between beliefs concerning parental influence and the interview measures of the three parenting styles are shown in Table 12. Surprisingly, authoritative parents were significantly less likely to mention the Stimulating Environment model ($p < .05$). Authoritative parents also tended to perceive the home as having a greater influence on children's education than the school ($p < .10$). No other consistent associations with educational models or beliefs were revealed in these analyses.

Role of parent education and family background. Table 12 also shows the correlations between the role of parent education and family background and the three parenting style measures. Level of authoritativeness was positively correlated with beliefs in the importance of parent education classes ($p < .05$). No other significant family correlations were revealed.

Typical homework practices. When helping with math homework, permissive parents reported less use of structuring techniques than others ($p < .05$). They also reported more tendancy to refer the child to school, rather than help themselves ($p < .05$). No clear patterns of associations with general homework attitudes emerged for authoritarian parents.

Table 12: Parenting Style Correlations, Pooled over Parent Group, for Parent Influence Beliefs and Family Background

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Parental Influence Beliefs:			
Stimulating Environment	.227	.037	-.431*
Behavioral	-.259	.318**	.047
Affective	.005	-.232	.031
Social Learning	-.029	-.036	-.082
Discussion	-.001	-.260	.031
Guidance	.078	.159	-.115
Total	.019	-.040	-.038
Importance of School vs Home	-.127	.110	-.292**

@ pooled across three ethnic groups, df = 30

Table 12 (continued)

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Family Background:			
Parent Ed. Classes	-.143	-.232	.363*
Parents' Stress on Education	-.024	.070	.134
Own Parents' Help with Homework	-.164	.228	.023

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

When dealing with homework, parents high on authoritativeness reported more structuring as a general technique for encouraging children's study ($p < .05$). They were less likely to refer the child to school and avoid assistance themselves ($p < .05$). Other homework techniques were not related to reports of this style (see Table 13).

Problem techniques for homework. Correlations between various problem techniques for homework and parenting styles are shown in Table 14. When dealing with a child frustrated with homework, permissive parents report fewer attempts to establish a liaison with the school ($p < .05$), less provision of problem solutions ($p < .05$), but more tendency to tutor ($p < .05$).

When authoritarian parents were faced with children who did not want to study, they tended to report less structuring and facilitation ($p < .10$). These parents were less likely to directly tutor a child who is refusing to study ($p < .05$).

Parents who ranked high on authoritativeness reported less use of direct behavior control strategies when children refuse to study ($p < .05$), as well as more monitoring ($p < .05$). They were less willing to view reluctance to study as the child's responsibility, presumably thus reducing their own responsibility, $p < .05$. In the event of frustration

Table 13 Parenting Style Correlations: Homework Help

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Homework Help:			
Do Most Parents Help?	-.069	-.055	.072
Amount should Help	-.387*	.163	.167
Amount of Help given	.173	-.186	-.034
Math Help:			
Structure	-.358*	.129	.379*
Monitor	.072	.068	.041
Control	---	---	---
Tutor	.101	-.023	.059
Solutions	-.139	-.028	.056
Refer to School	.446*	.032	-.378*
Total #	-.384*	-.102	-.018

Table 14 Parenting Style Correlations:

Problem Techniques for Homework

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Refuse to Study:			
Structure	-.020	-.309**	-.196
Monitor	-.176	-.185	.370*
Control	-.113	.104	-.458*
Tutor	.273	-.568*	.204
Solutions	-.145	.044	.107
School Liaison	----	----	----
Discussion	.129	.093	-.278
Child's Responsibility	.242	.209	-.445*
Total #	.007	.059	.094
Frustrated:			
Structure	.012	.029	-.119

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Monitor	----	----	----
Control	.107	.044	-.024
Tutor	.353*	-.113	-.172
Solutions	-.438*	.089	.361*
School Liaison	-.395*	-.078	.400*
Discussion	-.066	-.047	.115
Child's Responsibility	.161	-.148	-.030
Total #	.185	-.158	.174

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

with homework, a positive correlation was found between authoritative parenting and reports of liaison with the school ($p < .05$). These parents were also more likely to report provision of solutions to the frustrated child, ($p < .05$).

Response to good and poor grades. Table 15 shows parenting style correlations with responses to student grades. Permissive parenting was related to less use of punishment for poor grades ($p < .05$), and tended to be related to greater use of discussion in this context ($p < .10$). It also tended to be linked to greater use of reward for good grades ($p < .10$).

When responding to a child's good grades, authoritarian parents reported they would avoid overpraise significantly more ($p < .05$). In the case of poor grades, these parents responded by tending to punish more ($p < .10$).

More authoritative parents were less concerned about overpraising their children's successful school results ($p < .05$). However, they also used material rewards less with their successful children ($p < .05$). Authoritative parenting was not associated with distinctive responses to poor grades, however. No other associations between parenting style and responses to school outcomes were revealed.

Homework system and feelings about helping. The correlations between homework feelings and practices and the three parenting styles are displayed in Table 16. No significant correlations were found.

Table 16 also shows correlations between the homework system variables and parenting styles. Parent level of permissiveness is negatively correlated with reports of a special time to study in the home ($p < .05$). Permissive parents also tend to be less likely to provide designated areas for study in the home ($p < .10$).

Authoritarian parenting was not related to a general homework system. However, parents who scored high on authoritativeness more often reported designating a particular time for homework to be done ($p < .05$).

Parental contact with the school. Table 17 shows the correlations between parent reports of school contact and the three interview measures of parenting style, pooled over ethnic group. Level of permissiveness is negatively related to amount of reported yearly school contact ($p < .05$). Authoritarian parenting shows no association with school contact. In contrast, authoritative parents, as predicted, were more likely to report high levels of school contact, and to value school contact more ($ps < .05$).

Table 15 Parenting Style Correlations: Responses to Children's Grades

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Good Grades			
Praise	.064	-.203	.151
Avoid Overpraise	-.250	.561*	-.416*
Reward	.294**	-.146	-.376*
Poor Grades:			
Punish	-.397*	.305**	.150
Positive Tone	.111	.181	.009
Correct	----	----	----
Diagnose	-.049	.180	-.183
Threaten	-.105	.153	.062
Discuss	.322**	-.226	-.165

* p< .05 ** p< .10

Prediction task. Correlations between prediction variables and parenting styles are shown in Table 18 . Only two correlations are significant. A positive correlation is revealed between authoritative parenting and the difference between predicted and actual scores ($p < .05$), indicating that authoritative parents were likely to make more erroneous predictions, contrary to expectations. This was due to the tendency for authoritative parents to predict higher scores than their children actually achieved ($p < .05$).

Atttribution patterns. Table 18 also shows correlations between attribution patterns for children's school performance and parenting styles. A considerable number of significant associations appear. Permissive parents were more likely to attribute their children's school performance to effort or lack of effort ($p < .05$). A negative correlation appears between authoritarian parenting and the use of school/teacher attributions ($p < .05$). As well, a positive correlation is found between authoritarian parenting and attribution to children's ability ($p < .05$). In contrast, authoritative parents attribute their children's school performance more to the home's influence ($p < .05$) and to the school/teacher factor ($p < .05$). Level of authoritativeness is also negatively related to ability attributions ($p < .05$).

Table 16 Parenting Style Correlations: Homework System and Feelings about Helping

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Time	-.343*	.267	.506*
Place	-.312**	.241	.153
Resources	-.094	-.001	.131
Feelings About Homework	.250	.238	-.004
Value Homework	.056	.000	-.051
Feelings About Helping	.064	.071	-.192

* $p < .05$

** $p < .10$

Table 17 Parenting Style Correlations: Contact with School

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Times/year	-.468*	.074	.527*
Initiative	.047	-.074	.002
Level of Comfort	.007	.194	-.135
Imp. of Contact	-.192	-.251	.419*
Future Contact	.020	-.178	.147
Discuss Homework	.039	-.195	.052
Useful to Discuss	-.022	.044	.040

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

Table 18 Parenting Style Correlations: Prediction of Math Scores and Attributions for School Performance

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Math Predictions:			
Prediction	-.217	.149	.400*
WRAT Score	.064	.224	-.06
Difference	-.297**	-.066	.450*
Attributions:			
Ability	.060	.411*	-.487*
Effort	.355*	.124	-.114
Teacher/School	-.016	-.365*	.385*
Home	-.239	-.175	.368*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

Discussion

The results of the various analyses revealed a number of interesting patterns. Differences in educational beliefs and practices emerged between parenting styles, ethnic groups, and between teachers and parents as a whole. One preliminary issue had to do with possible child gender differences. It is interesting to note that very few sex differences and no interactions of ethnicity with sex were found, suggesting that child gender is not strongly linked to parents' attitudes and practices around homework and school contact. Thus, for most interview areas, child gender is not discussed at all.

One notable sex effect did occur, however, with parents overpredicting their sons' WRAT scores for mathematics much more than parents of daughters. This may reflect a basic sex stereotype (e.g., Parsons et al., 1982). There is a belief that boys are better performers in math, leading to higher parental expectations of sons than daughters. These aspirations were unfounded in the present instance however, as no significant difference was revealed between the actual scores of boys and girls on the WRAT math test in this sample.

A second preliminary question concerned the validity of our interview measure of parenting style, adapted from Dornbusch

et al. (1985). The interview and questionnaire measures of parenting style were significantly correlated for authoritativeness and permissiveness, demonstrating some evidence of construct validity. However, these two measures failed to correlate for authoritarian parenting styles. It is possible that the interview and questionnaire measures tapped two separate dimensions of authoritarianism. Alternatively, some minority parents may have misinterpreted the questionnaire items, due to their lack of fluency in English. Our general presumption was that the interview measures were likely to be more valid because parents were more likely to have understood these items correctly. They were used in all subsequent parenting style analyses.

It is useful to begin by summarizing these diverse results by topic area. Following this, the three general hypotheses will be discussed in turn and then the implications of the findings for future research and for practice will be considered.

Parenting Style Variations by Ethnic Group

Results for these measures were generally consistent with the findings of Dornbusch et al. (1987). Authoritarian styles were more common in the Greek and East Indian parent groups for both interview and questionnaire indices. As well, permissive styles tended not to differ among parent groups, but were less common among teachers as "ideal"

patterns. Authoritative parenting was somewhat more typical of Anglo parents than the Greek and East Indian groups, but these differences were not marked for either questionnaire or interview measures. Teacher "ideals" for the interview decision-making measure were markedly authoritative in pattern however, though what actual practices might be is another question. The only gender difference was a greater use of authoritative patterns with boys than with girls. However, this occured only on the questionnaire measure, which as noted is subject to more interpretative problems than the interview results.

Beliefs About Parental Influences on Education

The most commonly discussed "models" found in responses to this question involved ideas of social learning and modelling influences, affective influences, and the behavioral control framework (see Table 3). The stimulating environment model and the guidance and discussion themes were generally not too common among parents.

Parenting style was generally not closely associated with beliefs about educational influences. Permissiveness showed no significant associations. However, parents ranked high on authoritarianism tended to perceive themselves as influencing their children's learning through behavioral control, discipline and pressure. One authoritarian parent's comments clearly exemplify this attitude:

"Children must be forced to study; you have to keep the pressure on." This emphasis upon control is highly consistent with Baumrind's (1973, p.22) definition of the authoritarian parent, who attempts to "shape,control and evaluate behavior of the child, using forceful methods to restrain the child's self-will."

The authoritative parenting style was, surprisingly, associated with less mention of the idea of a stimulating environment. This pattern is not readily interpretable based on the Baumrind conceptualization. As expected, authoritative parents tend to be more likely to recognize their own role in the learning process, and understand the necessity of home-school collaboration in order to maximize their children's school success. In general, however, most parents tended to emphasize the role of the school in children's learning, overall.

Differences in ideas about parent influence which occur between groups reflect a number of interesting discrepancies between parent and teacher belief systems, as well as revealing some ethnic variations. Firstly, results show that the importance of a stimulating home environment is emphasized substantially more by teachers than parents. This difference may be the direct result of the formal training of educators, and their awareness of the impact of environmental factors upon children's early learning. Most parents lack this exposure to education theory, and so may

underemphasize the importance of stimulating interest in learning in the home through books, family outings, and so on. As a group, parents embrace the behavioral model of influencing children's learning substantially more than the teachers. The teacher group also favors the affective model of parental influence compared to parents, emphasizing the importance of support and encouragement of children's interests. Again, these parent-teacher differences may reflect teachers' training in education theory, with its emphasis upon positive, supportive and encouraging learning environments.

The single clear ethnic group difference among the parents involved reference to the social learning model. Anglo parents as well as teachers embrace the idea of "social learning" (i.e., learning through modelling and example) more than do minority parents. This disparity among parent groups is consistent with the expectation that parents of Anglo origin share teachers' perspectives to a greater extent than their minority counterparts. The finding may reflect a culturally-transmitted belief in Anglo society that "children learn by what they see", with parents functioning as role models. However, based on the data, it appears reasonable to question if all cultures emphasize this social learning model to the same extent. Consistent with the ideas of Goodnow (e.g., 1985), there may be "culturally - packaged" differences in these concepts. Research in this area may shed further light upon this

issue.

Anglo parents and teachers also discussed more diverse influence models overall than did the Greek or Indian parent groups (see Table 2). However, this difference may well be related simply to greater fluency in English, the language of the interview, and should be interpreted cautiously.

Finally, with regard to the relative importance of the home and school in children's learning, both parents and teachers place more responsibility upon the school. No group differences were found. In terms of parenting style, authoritativeness was marginally positively correlated with more responsibility upon the home, as expected.

Parent Education and Family Background

Parents generally expressed positive feelings about the value of formal parent education classes (see Table 4). As well, they reported that their own parents had tended to stress the value of an education, but had not been able to provide much direct help with homework, often due to their own limited education.

There were few parenting style or ethnic variations in these patterns. However, authoritative parents were more open to the role of parent education resources, such as classes or books. Family stress on education and homework help in

parental background were not related to parenting style variables. In terms of ethnic differences, East Indian parents reported that their families stressed education the most. This finding suggests that East Indian families place a higher value upon scholarly achievement than the other groups, perhaps perceiving education as a path towards employment and status. However, the small sample size must render any interpretations highly tentative.

Help with Homework

Parents as a whole reported some assistance with their children's homework, although typically not on a regular, weekly basis. In general, parents felt that this amount of help was sufficient. Teachers as a group, however, were not in favor of direct parental assistance with schoolwork, preferring parents to maintain a more indirect role (i.e., creating a home environment which would encourage learning).

In general, direct tutoring was the most common strategy used by parents when helping their children with homework, with monitoring assignments and providing structure close behind. Using behavioral controls, providing solutions and referring to the school for help were least mentioned by parents in general.

Findings reveal some parenting style differences with regard to homework beliefs and practices. Permissive parents hold

a "laissez faire" attitude, favoring less parental help. When helping with math homework, permissive parents report less use of structuring. In contrast, authoritativeness is related to more structuring. These findings seem consistent with Baumrind's (1973) definitions of parenting style. Permissive parents act in a 'nonpunitive, nondirective manner' when dealing with homework issues, probably delegating much of the responsibility to the school. Authoritative parents, on the other hand, appear to walk a middle ground between authoritarian control and laissez-faire permissiveness. Results suggest that they are actively involved with their children's learning, yet they prefer to maintain an indirect managerial role (i.e., through providing structure for the child to do the homework tasks). Interestingly, such a "managerial" role is the sort described by Baumrind (1988) as typical of authoritative control as exercised by the parents of adolescents in her most recent studies.

A number of interesting group differences emerged in the area of homework assistance and problem-solving strategies. As expected, teachers' attitudes conform more closely with those of Anglo parents than with minority families. Minority parents place more emphasis upon parental assistance with school activities, and express greater confidence of widespread parental involvement than do teachers or Anglo parents. This difference in outlook may be understood when the minority families' current life

situations are considered. Many have immigrated to Canada with a strong desire to create a better life for their children. As education is perceived as the path towards this goal, they are highly motivated to assist their children, frequently under difficult circumstances. They naturally assume that other parents share these values and assist their children, particularly those with a mastery of the language.

In terms of helping techniques, no significant difference between the three ethnic groups were revealed. However, an interesting disparity is found between the teacher and parent groups. While parents as a whole practice direct assistance through tutoring, particularly in mathematics, teachers advocate indirect parental support by providing structure, organization and resources for the child. Teachers express reservations about direct parental involvement. For example, one said that "parents should be providing kids with structure and support but not getting into the real nitty gritty of teaching". Evidently, some concern exists over parents' ability to teach school material to their children. It is clear that while both parents and teachers envision some role for the home with regard to homework assistance, the two groups hold somewhat discrepant ideas about the nature and extent of this support. Closer communication and open dialogue between the two spheres may help to mutually define and clarify this parental role.

Homework Problem Techniques

In general, parents reported using control methods most frequently with children who refused to study. Structuring their children's schoolwork was the second most common parental response to this problem. Liaison with the school and direct tutoring were reported least frequently by parents. With frustrated children, structuring homework was the most favored response from parents, while providing solutions and monitoring work were the least frequent.

The strategies which different types of parents employ to deal with school-related problems also conform well with Baumrind's parenting style classifications. Permissive parents are inclined to place responsibility for learning on the child, and thereby favor less direct parental intervention (e.g., "I tell him it's up to him if he wants to pass, it's up to him to get help"). Authoritative parents reject this non-intervening approach; they do not place all responsibility for learning on the child. They attempt to assist by providing structure to the work, setting guidelines and directing the child to resources. When confronted with academic difficulties, authoritative parents are also more likely to report establishing liaison with the school. This willingness to collaborate with school staff clearly reflects the authoritative parent's belief that the home and school share responsibility for a

child's learning.

There were few ethnic variations in problem-solving techniques overall. However, when dealing with a child who is frustrated/reluctant to study, Greek parents respond with control behavior to compel the child to study. This disparity may reflect underlying cultural differences between a more permissive North American society which stresses individual responsibility and self-reliance, and the more traditional Greek culture, where parental authority and respect is strongly maintained. The only other difference here involved a greater use of liaison with the school by Anglo parents when the child is frustrated with homework.

When children are reluctant to study, teachers and parents differed considerably in ideas overall. Teachers emphasized the importance of structuring the child's regime, regularly monitoring work and maintaining home-school links, perceiving the ideal parent as "sideline support". Parents as a whole reported less structuring and monitoring of their reluctant children's work. They also did not mention contacting the school as a possible strategy.

Dealing with School Success and Failure

When their children bring good results from school, most parents respond with praise, although feelings were mixed

with regard to offering rewards. In the case of poor grades, reports of actual punishment were low, while parents as a whole revealed mixed feelings about using threats and about attempting to diagnose their children's school problems.

In the instance of successful academic results, authoritative parents respond with unconditional praise. The authoritarian parent, however, appears to be consciously restrained (e.g., "I'm so happy but I tell her 'it's not enough, bring better grades' because otherwise she'll stop working"). There is an evident concern that the child's motivation to achieve will decline if parental pressure is lifted, even temporarily. Permissive parents tend to advocate use of material rewards, whereas authoritative parents seldom mention this pattern.

With poor grades, the authoritarian parent tends to respond in a punishing and negative manner, with less effort to maintain a positive outlook. Parents high on the permissive dimension, on the other hand, are least likely to punish or threaten their unsuccessful children, conforming with Baumrind's description of the "nonpunitive and acceptant", permissive parent. They also tend to advocate discussion of the problem. Authoritativeness did not seem to be linked to specific responses to poor grades.

When dealing with good academic results, both teachers and

Anglo parents advocate unqualified praise. Ethnic parents however, sometimes temper their positive responses, warning their children against relaxing and bringing the grades down. Greek parents are most likely to provide their successful children with material rewards. In the words of one Greek father: "School is like a job. In a job you get money, so why not something for the kids?" There is considerably less emphasis upon rewarding good grades in the other parent groups, which suggests a culturally transmitted value/practice among these Greek families.

In the case of poor grades, teachers emphasize the parent's role in correcting and diagnosing the child's academic problems. In contrast, Greek parents are most likely to threaten their children to "try harder" or face consequences, whereas teachers fail to mention this at all.

Homework System

Overall, the parents reported that homework was not generally done at a special time (only about 36% said it was). About half the sample reported that homework was done in a special place, while most parents reported at least some educational resources were available at home to help with homework.

As a whole, parents were fairly satisfied with the amount of homework their children were receiving from school, although

there was a tendency to desire more work. In general, parents placed a high value on homework for their children. When helping their children, parents as a whole reported harboring mixed feelings, often commenting that it 'depends on the subject'. Teachers on the other hand, perceived parents as having much more negative feelings around helping their children than were actually reported.

As expected, permissive parents are less likely to provide a special time or place for studies at home. This lack of structure is consistent with their generally nondirective and noncontrolling approach to childraising, and reflects their relative uninvolvement with children's school-based activities. Authoritative parents report more emphasis on special times for homework to be done. However, this effect was mainly attributable to the Greek parent sample, and should be interpreted cautiously.

Among the parent ethnic groups, children of Anglo origin are provided with the most resources at home to facilitate their studies. In order to understand this discrepancy, it is important to consider the difficult life circumstances of many in the ethnic sample. As New Canadians, they confront financial as well as cultural obstacles, and may not be in the position to provide their children with resource material. For example, one parent said "I would like to give them those things very much, but there is no money now for that."

School Contact

Most parents reported two to three contacts per year with teachers, but fewer of these were self-initiated contacts overall. Level of comfortableness with contact was generally high, indicating that the school was perceived as an approachable place by most of these parents. More contacts and discussions around homework were generally valued very highly by parents (see Table 9).

The parenting style associations in this part of the interview were generally interpretable. Authoritative parents reported greater contact with the school, a clear reflection of their underlying philosophy concerning learning. As education is recognized as a shared responsibility of the home and school, it follows that communication between the two spheres is pursued more and also valued more highly. In contrast, the permissive parent tends to delegate the responsibility of learning to the school as noted previously. Thus parent-teacher contact assumes a lower priority, and the parent is less likely to visit his/her child's school.

There are no significant ethnic differences in the overall frequency of contact among the three parent groups. The minority group seemed generally satisfied with school contact. However, Anglo parents also felt that they had

more opportunities to discuss homework with the teachers. Many of the minority parents expressed surprise to learn that they could initiate contact with teachers. Apparently, the guidelines and boundaries of the parent-teacher relationship are somewhat unclear to parents, especially those of non-Anglo origin. This represents another issue which may be clarified and defined through open parent-teacher discussion.

Prediction Task

The math portion of the WRAT was used with the students in this sample, and parents made predictions about how well they would do. In general, parents tended to overpredict (M=29) versus children's actual scores (M=20). This pattern was especially true for parents of boys (M=33), who overpredicted significantly more than did parents of girls (M=25).

Results of the prediction task ran contrary to expectations with regard to parenting style. There were no differences overall in child performance by parenting style, but authoritative parents proved the worst predictors of performance, due to their strong tendency to over-predict children's achievement. These findings somewhat conflict with earlier studies, where the authoritative parenting style was associated with highest academic performance (Dornbusch et. al., 1987). Also, our expectation was that

the authoritative parent's involvement and awareness of his/her child's progress would render the most accurate prediction. However, parent optimism may be generally beneficial (as in the case of boys versus girls, noted above.) Clearly, further studies are needed on this issue. There were no significant ethnic variations in children's scores or parents' predictions on this task.

Attributions

Parents generally attributed their children's school performance least to home and most to the school. Conversely, teachers made most attributions to the home and least to the school. One might describe this as a defensive sort of pattern ("don't blame me"), with each group placing responsibility on the other.

In light of the authoritative parent's emphasis upon home-school collaboration, his/her academic attribution patterns are hardly surprising. Responsibility for progress is channelled away from the child's unchangeable qualities (i.e., ability) and placed more upon the home and the school. Authoritarian parents, in contrast, perceive the child's innate ability as primarily determining his/her progress in school. The quality of teaching and other school factors are regarded as less influential. More permissive parents tend to show greater use of effort attributions, again generally consistent with their emphasis

on the child's responsibility for school performance, since this is an unstable, controllable factor.

Effort is viewed as the most important factor for determining children's progress by Greek parents, while the home factor is dismissed as least influential. This focus on the child's effort in school may shed light upon the Greek parent's negative response to poor grades. Failure to achieve is attributed to the child's lack of effort, and thus the parent is more likely to respond by punishment, threats, and efforts to alter motivation. The other ethnic groups did not appear particularly distinctive here.

Orienting Hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated that parenting style would be significantly associated with tutoring practices and patterns of school relations across ethnic groups. In fact, an authoritative parenting style was quite consistently related to homework practices, patterns of attribution, and home-school relations. Permissive and authoritarian patterns, across ethnic groups, were less clear.

Authoritative parents place joint responsibility upon the home and school for their children's learning; they express hope of a partnership situation, in which the two spheres collaborate for the ultimate benefit of the child. They view parenting as a complex and at times confusing endeavor,

and thereby welcome the opportunity to widen their scope and expand their knowledge base through parent education. Essentially, the authoritative parent walks a tightrope balancing control and freedom, according to the child's needs.

In the area of homework assistance, authoritative parents favor an active, but indirect stance. They express a reluctance to jump into a homework situation uninvited and assume a teacher role. As one parent said "... it's a difficult age; they still need that hug and encouragement, but you have to do it in such a way that they don't feel you're being an overwhelming, overprotective parent." Parents rated high on authoritativeness prefer to act as managers, overseeing the homework task and providing structure, organization and resources. When dealing with academic difficulties, these parents are more likely to establish a connection with the school, and to express a desire to work together with teachers towards a solution.

Authoritative parents maintain the highest level of contact with the school, and place considerable value upon parent-teacher communication. This conforms well with their underlying collaborative approach to children's learning. As well one can argue that authoritative parents feel more "agentic" (Baumrind, 1988), that is, more able to influence their children's performance, and that this may be central in their increased involvement. The authoritative parent's

attributions for school performance reflects both a collaborative home-school approach and a sense of confidence in his/her own parental influence. Responsibility is placed primarily on the role of the home and school, rather than upon the child's ability or effort. Finally, authoritative parents are the most "optimistic" about their children's mathematics performance, though this meant they were the least accurate predictors overall.

The authoritarian parent perceives his/her role as a "controlling agent" in the child's life, molding the child's behavior through a system of reward and punishment and direct pressure. This "behaviorist" emphasis is somewhat reflected in ideas about schooling and homework for these parents. The home is responsible for pushing and placing academic demands upon the child. For example, one parent remarked: "Parents always have to push, to keep the pressure on the kids". This emphasis upon parental control suggests a somewhat simplistic approach to parenting. Discipline operates through rewards and punishment, compelling children to conform to what is right. Thus it is not surprising to discover many authoritarian parents expressing negative feelings concerning parent education classes. As one said, "Why do I have to read books? I know what to do".

Poor school results are handled in a somewhat punitive manner, with little attempt to maintain a positive approach.

With good grades, authoritarian parents qualify their praise with warnings against complacency, and demand that their children strive even harder. As one parent said, "I'm happy inside [when the grades are good] but I don't show it because then she will stop trying hard."

In contrast to the authoritarian group, parents ranked high on permissiveness are generally noncontrolling and nonpunitive, allowing children to regulate their own activities as much as possible. Consistent with this, the permissive parent maintains a certain distance from the child's academic career, expressing reluctance to intervene in school-related issues.

This "hands off" philosophy underlies the attitudes and practices of permissive parents regarding homework issues. In general, these parents express a reluctance to involve themselves with their children's home studies. In a helping situation, they are more likely to refer the child back to the teacher for help rather than becoming actively involved. There is little effort at providing structure and support to homework tasks, with one permissive parent contending that "It's the child's responsibility [to do homework], we can't really do much". This passive, nondirective approach is highly consistent with Baumrind's (1973) description of the permissive parent as one who "allows the child to regulate his/her activities as much as possible." This parent advocates maximum freedom and independence, allowing the

child to learn from his/her own experiences. Consequently, he/she is unlikely to provide children with an established regime and designated area to study. Parents are nonpunitive even when grades are poor, and the permissive parent engages in little school contact over the course of the year. Children's school performance is viewed as primarily a function of the child's level of effort, not something for which the parent is directly responsible.

The second hypothesis stated that ethnic differences were expected to emerge in parenting styles, homework practices and parental belief systems.

As expected, a number of interesting ethnic group differences were discerned with regard to parenting style. Anglo parents were found to be most permissive while the two other parent groups were highest on the authoritarian dimension. Anglo parents were also somewhat higher on authoritativeness than were the other two groups of parents. These ethnic variations may reflect differences in cultural beliefs and values about parenting. Both the Greek and East Indian parents in the sample had been socialized in older, more traditional societies, in which great value is attached to parental authority and respect. Thus, the idea of joint decision-making for parent and adolescent may be somewhat less common.

In terms of parental belief systems about learning and the

family, only two notable ethnic differences emerged. Greek parents were least inclined to mention positive encouragement (i.e., Affective model) as an important influence on children's learning. Further, neither the Greek nor East Indian parent groups mentioned social learning and modelling as important factors. Anglo parents referred to the social learning concept substantially more often. As Goodnow (e.g., 1985) has noted, there may be important cultural differences in the "models" of learning and development that underlie parenting patterns in different groups. This question clearly deserves more study.

Attitudes about homework assistance yielded some ethnic differences. When asked to estimate general parental involvement in homework, Anglo parents predicted much lower involvement than the two ethnic groups. Parents in the Anglo sample also expressed more ambivalence around helping with homework than did minority parents, who expressed a strong desire to help their children. Actual frequency of parental help, however, showed no differences. Results suggest that although these ethnic parents express more desire to help, their difficult life circumstances and limited English restrict their homework involvement. As one ethnic parent comments, "I want to help him so much more but with two jobs and little English, [it is] not possible".

No ethnic differences emerged with regard to general helping

practices with homework. Parents' problem-solving strategies, however, did reveal some ethnic variations. For children who are reluctant to study, Greek parents reported using more behavioral controls and less structuring. Similarly, Greek parents responded to children's frustration with homework with more behavioral controls. Anglo parents, on the other hand, were more likely to form a liaison and work with the school than the two minority groups. They also tended to view children's studies as not a parental responsibility and would intervene less.

When responding to children's good grades, Greek parents were more likely to use material rewards with their successful children. In the case of poor grades, parents of Greek origin reported they would threaten and warn their unsuccessful children more than the other groups. In general then, homework and grades revealed only a few differences among parent groups, particularly a greater emphasis on control and reinforcement techniques in the Greek sample.

The extent to which parents provided a special time and place for study failed to reveal any ethnic group differences. However, Anglo parents provided more resources to help their children (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias) than did the ethnic groups. This discrepancy may be explained by many minority parents' limited finances, as well as their unfamiliarity with English resource material.

Only one ethnic group difference was found in terms of contact with the school. Anglo, East Indian and Greek parents reported similar frequencies of interaction with the school, and similar wishes for future contact. However, Anglo parents reported more discussion of homework issues with their children's teachers. It may be that immigrant parents feel some sense of insecurity about asking certain questions around school issues. Many are unfamiliar with the Canadian school system, as well as lacking fluency in English. As well, certain cultural values and expectations may inhibit them from directly approaching a respected authority such as a teacher about specific issues regarding homework. Overall, however, all groups reported a relatively high level of comfort in interacting with the school. As well, in the cases of parents' prediction of child performance and attributions for school progress, no significant ethnic differences occurred.

The third hypothesis suggested that teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning education and homework issues would be more discrepant with the views of minority group parents than those of Anglo parents.

Results indicated a few instances in which teachers and Anglo parents shared beliefs which differed considerably from those held by minority parents. In the case of parental influence, both teachers and Anglo parents

discussed the importance of imitation and modelling processes, while most minority group parents did not mention this idea.

With regard to homework assistance, Anglo parents and teachers both expressed some ambivalence about helping. They were also generally pessimistic about the amount of homework support provided in the neighborhood area. Minority group parents, on the other hand, strongly advocated helping children with homework and believed most parents in the area did actually help.

In the case of homework practices and strategies, there were no indications that teachers and Anglo parents shared common ideas that contrasted with those of ethnic parents. The expectation that their shared North American cultural background would lead to similar approaches to homework issues was not supported. One effect was noted, however, with responses to children's school results. Minority group parents tended to avoid overpraise in the case of good grades; a finding which does not emerge among teachers and Anglo parents. Overall then, the third hypothesis with respect to variations in teacher-parent congruence across ethnic groups was not well supported, except perhaps with respect to general beliefs about development and learning. Instead, parents of all ethnic groups showed considerable divergence from teachers in a number of areas.

It was evident that important discrepancies between parents and teachers existed with regard to many areas. Teachers as a group prescribe a much more authoritative decison-making style than parents actually report, strongly advocating joint decision-making for early adolescent and parent. With regard to parental influence factors, teachers focus upon the importance of a stimulating home environment (e.g., books, family outings, discussions) to a much greater extent than do parents. Parents, on the other hand, attach greater importance to the behavioral control model for influencing children's learning. Collectively, parents appear to hold a more concrete, practical vision of themselves as "influencers" (e.g., "we have to make sure they do their homework"), while teachers perceive the parent's role in a much broader scope. In the words of one teacher: "the parent can light the flame of learning for the child ... the parent sets the stage, the home can spark that curiosity or destroy it forever". Evidently, educators attribute considerable power to the home with regard to shaping children's learning patterns. Perhaps teachers could assume greater responsibility for sharing their insight with parents, who generally seem less aware of home environmental impacts on their children. This same pattern of discrepancy was noted in the questions focused directly on attributions for children's school performance. While parents rank the school-teacher variable as more important than the home factor, teachers attribute academic success to the home variable substantially more than the school-teacher factor.

Teachers, in general, feel that the home environment can largely determine a child's degree of success in school. Parents, on the other hand, attribute more to school-teacher factors. This suggests that both sides are, to some extent, abdicating personal responsibility for children's learning, and placing the "blame" on the other.

In terms of actual homework practices, teachers favor significantly less parental help than do parents as a group. They appear reluctant to encourage schoolwork assistance from the home, reflecting Newson and Newson's (1979) parallel findings in an English elementary-school sample. Two concerns seem to underlie teachers' ambivalence: 1) fear that parents will "do the homework for the child" and 2) uncertainty around parents' competence to teach academics to their children. A pervasive feeling that "teaching should be left to the professionals" is evident. This finding is also consistent with Becker and Epstein's (1982) study which revealed teacher ambivalence about parental involvement.

The parental role around homework issues seems clouded in a veil of unclear expectations. This lack of clarification is further reflected when specific helping strategies are explored. Teachers perceive the ideal parent as having an indirect supportive role, facilitating children's studies through structuring and providing resources. This is closer

to the authoritative parents' perspective. However, parents as a whole envision their role as direct helpers, actively involved in tutoring the child. In order to work together as partners in education, parents and teachers must mutually define and clarify such expectations.

Teachers and parents also differ in their approaches to children who are reluctant to study. Teachers favor strategies involving structuring and monitoring (e.g., providing resources, organizing work, policing homework time). Forming supportive liaisons with the school is also seen as a viable strategy by teachers. Again, teachers' expectations of the parenting role as indirect and supporting are clearly reflected. Teachers are also unlikely to recommend rewards or threats in response to grades, whereas these are quite common patterns for parents. Overall then, teachers at the junior high school level differ from all parent groups quite considerably on their views about education and homework.

Future Research Questions

A number of interesting research questions emerge from the present exploratory study. To what extent are other ethnic backgrounds associated with particular parenting styles? To what degree are these parenting style categories interpretable across ethnic groups? For instance, is a "permissive" Anglo parent comparable to a "permissive"

African parent? Present findings indicate that some ethnic variations within parenting styles do exist, and the meanings of these styles may vary in different contexts (e.g., Baumrind, 1988; Dornbusch et al., 1987). Further work on this issue is obviously needed.

The possibility of attitude shift also poses some challenging issues. Which parental beliefs are entrenched through culture (Goodnow, 1984), and is changing them a viable option? What are children's perceptions of parents' educational philosophies and how does this affect school performance? How sensitive are teachers to the existence of different parenting styles and how do their approaches with various parents reflect this? Further research using larger, more ethnically diverse samples is needed to address these and other relevant issues.

Limitations of Study

There are certain limitations of this research which need to be addressed. First, the relatively small sample size affects the statistical strength of the results. A larger-scale study, involving larger samples and a wider range of minority groups, would be an important follow-up to this exploratory research.

Second, a question emerges regarding the homogeneity of each ethnic sample. In particular, parents in the East Indian

sample varied among themselves in terms of religion, dialect and region of origin; factors which are important to consider when attempting to draw conclusions from the results.

Third, it is important to recognize the issue of language facility among the ethnic groups. In general, minority parents did not possess the same fluency in English as did Anglo parents and teachers. This certainly affected their ability to express themselves, as well as their understanding and interpretation of the interview questions. There should be an awareness of this language factor when comparing results between Anglo and non-Anglo participants in the study.

As well, when interpreting group differences between parents and teachers, it needs to be recognized that teachers were responding to an "ideal parent" scenario, while parents were asked about their actual beliefs and practices. In a future study, it may be helpful to use a similar perspective for both parents and teachers (i.e., how should an "ideal" parent be?) in order to obtain more accurate comparisons between the two groups. It is also important to stress here once again that ethnic differences between parent groups were small overall, with the greatest discrepancies emerging between teachers and parents as a whole.

Possible Community-Based Interventions

A single dominant question emerges from the findings of the present study: How can a more meaningful partnership between parents and teachers be forged? Results suggest that educators and teachers may have definite and somewhat distinctive ideas concerning education and homework and may place a great deal of responsibility for children's learning upon each other. In order to achieve a true partnership, parents and teachers must learn to share this responsibility and mutually clarify their respective roles and expectations.

It is essential that any intervention which aims to foster positive home-school collaboration is not imposed in a "top-down" manner by educators. In order to clearly identify each group's issues and concerns, both parents and teachers must be actively involved in all aspects of project planning and development. In this light, Smith's (1979) action-research project represents a viable intervention model.

The initial step would involve organizing a core group of volunteer parents, representing the major ethnic clusters in the neighborhood area. Each of these volunteers would assume a leadership role, actively appealing to other parents and promoting awareness of the need for home-school collaboration. These parent leaders, along with a core

group of interested teachers, could work together and organize a series of community meetings and workshops. Through this collaborative planning process, the various needs and issues of both parents and teachers could be addressed. These community-based meetings would serve as a forum where both sides could openly discuss their concerns around homework and educational issues. As well, such a forum would provide an opportunity to define and clarify parent and teacher roles and expectations, with both groups actively participating in this process.

These initial meetings could set the groundwork for a variety of future home-school projects. Some interesting possibilities include: information sessions for parents to help them create a learning-conducive home environment, and "homework workshops" in which parents and teachers can share ideas and concerns. As well, ethnic community centres could organize "teacher education" sessions, to promote educators' understanding and sensitivity to the various socio-cultural groups in the area. In-service training, in which experienced E.S.L. teachers could share their insight and knowledge around cultural issues with other staff, is another possible option.

In order to foster positive home-school relations, it is essential for teachers to maintain regular contact with parents , and to actively encourage this communication. Parents, particularly New Canadians, may be uncertain of

school protocol and thus may feel reluctant to initiate contact. Thus it behooves the teacher to clarify expectations and encourage contact.

In designing home-school interventions, the issue of parenting style may also play some role. It is likely that a "permissive" parent's response to home-school collaboration may differ considerably from a parent who ranks high on authoritativeness. Thus it is important for educators to have some awareness of these parenting variations. It may be useful for teachers to develop different approaches which work most effectively with each parenting style.

The journey towards true home-school collaboration is a difficult one, filled with obstacles and pitfalls. Undoubtedly, any attempts to reshape both teachers' and parents' entrenched views around authority and home-school relationships present clear challenges. Change always threatens, and is countered initially with resistance. Yet only through the shifting of attitudes and the sharing of responsibility can parents and teachers become true partners in education.

Clearly, many questions concerning homework, learning and the home-school interface remain unanswered. It is hoped that the present exploratory study will generate further work in this little-researched, yet important, area.

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Appendix A

Parent Interview Parenting Style

I'm going to list some issues which come up with children around _____'s age. I would like you to tell me how decisions around these issues are made in your home: 1) Do both you and your child discuss this issue together, and some guidelines come out of that discussion? 2) Do you decide about this alone, without much discussion with your child? or 3) Does your child decide about this alone, without much discussion with you?

1) choosing clothes

2) how late he/she can stay out

3) choosing friends

4) how to spend money

5) how much TV to watch and when to watch

6) when he/she can start dating and with whom

7) Does your child have chores around the house that he/she

is expected to you? If yes, who decides what chores and when they are done?

8) Who decides what structured activities outside school (such as music lessons, sports teams) your child will participate in?

Beliefs about Education and Learning

Now I am going to ask you about your feelings and beliefs regarding children's education and learning.

1) Do you feel that parents have an important role in children's learning? What is this role?

2) How much responsibility do you place on school for teaching academic skills?

3a) How much responsibility do you place on home for teaching these skills?

b) How much influence do you believe a parent has on children's learning of academic skills?

4) How do you feel about parent education classes and books on parenting? Do you feel most parents would benefit from them?

5a) How much did your own parents emphasize education as valuable for your future?

b) How much did your own parents assist with homework when you were in school?

6) What weaknesses, if any, do you think our public school system has? How would you improve the school system?

Homework

In this part of the interview, I want to ask you some questions about your child's homework, how you deal with it and your feelings around it.

1a) Do you think most people help their children with homework?

b) Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

c) How much help do you feel parents should give their children?

d) How often do you help with your child's homework? (e.g., once a week, every day)

e) How do you help your child with math h.mework? (e.g., Do you usually do the first part so ____ will understand, refer____ to a textbook or other source, give examples of similar problems, ask what _____ thinks first, other ways?)

f) Does the way you help vary for different subjects?

g) Do other family members ever help your child?

2) What if your child doesn't want to study, how do you handle this?

3a) Does your child have special times to study? How do you handle rules about this?

3b) Does your child have a special place to study?

3c) Does your child have resources at home which can help him/her with homework (e.g., dictionary, encyclopedia, calculator)

4) When your child is frustrated about homework, how do you encourage him/her to keep going? (e.g., do you help organize,plan?)

5) How do you feel about the homework that your child is assigned? Is it too much or too little? Is it useful or just busywork? What would you like to see changed about

this?

6) How do you feel when you help your child with homework? How much do you enjoy this activity with your child?

7) What is your reaction and what do you do when your child brings home good grades? bad grades?

Contact/Involvement with School

1a) How many times a year do you or your husband visit your child's school?

b) What are the main reasons for visiting?

c) Do you visit as a result of invitations or on your own initiative?

d) Aside from meeting with your child's teacher to discuss his/her progress, are you involved with the school in any way?

2a) How comfortable do you feel when going to your child's school?

b) How comfortable do you feel talking with your child's teacher?

3) How important do you feel regular contact with the school is?

4) Would you like to have more, less or the same amount of contact in the future?

5) How often, if ever, do you and your child's teacher discuss homework and how to best help your child with studies at home?

6) Do you think this is/would be a useful discussion for you? If yes, what concerns or questions would you like to ask teachers regarding homework and helping your child at home?

Attributions for Learning

How well does _____ do in: 1) English 2) Math 3) Science 4) Gym 5) Music or Art 6) History/Social Studies

Which do you think has the most influence on how your child does in this area? Is it a) ability b) effort c) school/teacher factors or d) your help at home?

Which has the next most influence?

Prediction Task

I'm going to show you some math problems from a standardized test, which your child has completed in class. Based on what you know about your child's school progress, how well would you predict your child will do on this test? Which ones will ____ get right? wrong?

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Parental Styles

The following are some issues which seem to be relevant for most 7th graders. How do you feel parents should handle decision-making around these issues? Should the decision be made by 1) parents alone with little discussion with child 2) both parent and child together, with some guidelines coming out of discussion, or 3) child alone, little discussion with parents?

1) choosing clothes

2) how late he/she can stay out

3) choosing friends

4) how to spend money

5) how much TV to watch and when to watch

6) when he/she can start dating and with whom

7) household chores (eg. which chores, when to do them)

8) what structured activities outside school (such as music lessons, sports teams) child will participate in

Beliefs about Education and Learning

1) Do you feel that parents have an important role in children's learning? What role should they have?

2) How much responsibility do you place on school for teaching academic skills?

3a) How much responsibility do you place on home for teaching these skills?

b) How much influence do you think parents have on children's academic skills?

4) How do you feel about parent education classes and books on parenting? Do you feel most parents would benefit from them?

5) How much do you think a child's learning is affected by a stimulating environment?

Homework

1a) Do you think most parents help their children with homework?

b) Do you think this is a good idea?

c) How much help do you feel parents should give? How often should they help each week?

d) What type of assistance do you feel is most important for children's learning?

2) How do you think parents should handle children who do not want to study?

3) What do you think is the best response and course of action for parents when their children bring home good grades? bad grades?

4) What type of home environment do you feel is most conducive to study?

5) How do you think most parents feel when helping children in your class with homework? (e.g., comfortable, anxious)

6) How much value do you think most parents of children in your class place on homework?

7) Do you discuss homework issues with parents? (e.g., how to help children most effectively). Why or why not?

Teacher-Parent Contact

1) How many times a year do you plan meetings with student's parents to discuss children's progress?

2) Approximately what percentage of parents actually show up for these meetings?

3) Why do you think some parents don't attend these meetings, and generally fail to maintain contact with their children's school?

4) How often do parents call you on their own initiative to discuss their children's progress?

5) How comfortable are you talking to parents about their children? What problems if any do you encounter?

6) How do you think most parents feel when meeting with their children's teachers?

7) This is quite a multiethnic school, with students from a variety of backgrounds. What special problems, if any, do you feel this presents in terms of parent-teacher relations?

8) What changes, if any, would you like to see in terms of parental contact with the school, and parent-teacher relationships in general?

Attributions

What factor do you feel most influences the academic progress of the average child in 1) English 2) Math 3) Science 4) Gym 5) Music or Art 6) History/Social Studies

Is it 1) ability 2) effort 3) school/teacher factors, or 4) help from home?

Which factor(s) do you think most parents would attribute their children's progress to?

Appendix C

Communication Styles Questionnaire

Please read the following statements and circle how much you agree or disagree with each one, in regard to your own child:

1) By the time kids are in Junior High, there's not much a parent can do to give guidance.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

2) Children must be taught to respect and obey their parents because they are the head of the household.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

3) I trust my child to behave appropriately even in situations when I am not present.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

4) Children should not question parents' decision-making about important matters.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

5) I think children at this age should have their say on important family decisions.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

6) At this age, children should be able to make their own decisions with little need for discussion with their parents.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

7) It wouldn't worry me too much if my child got in trouble with friends. At this age, it is expected that children will get in trouble with their friends.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

8) I think it is important to talk about current issues with children at this age.

Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

9) Cnildren should realize that they will know better when they grow up and should listen to their parents.
Strongly Agree Agree Don't Know Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix D

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you of a research project being conducted by Tania Sebastian of Wilfrid Laurier University under the supervision of Dr. Michael Pratt. It concerns the topic of homework and learning, and the beliefs and practices of parents of various cultural groups and teachers around this important issue. We believe that by talking with both parents of different cultural backgrounds and teachers about their feelings regarding education, and homework in particular, we can learn some useful information which can be used to improve understanding and cooperation between the home and school.

This research has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University and the East York Board of Education but your own participation and that of your child is subject to your and your child's approval. The interview, which will take place in your home, will take about 60 minutes of your time. It will involve some questions about how you feel about learning and homework, your ideas about childrearing, decision-making in your home, how you handle schoolwork and how much contact you have with your child's school. As well, you will be asked to estimate how well you think your child did on a math test which was completed earlier in class. If you agree to participate in this study, your permission is needed for the researchers to see your child's results on this math test. The interview will be tape-recorded, but this tape will not be heard by anyone but ourselves, and will be erased as soon as we have completed coding.

All information which you provide will remain anonymous and strictly confidential. Please note that you are free to discontinue participation at any time. If you do agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form on the next page. After the interview is completed, we will provide a brief explanation of the study. If you wish a report of the results, you may indicate this on the consent form.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Tania Sebastian

Michael Pratt, Ed.D., Associate Professor

Dear Teacher:

This letter is to inform you of a research project being conducted by Tania Sebastian of Wilfrid Laurier University under the supervision of Dr. Michael Pratt. It concerns the topic of homework and learning, and the beliefs and practices of parents and teachers around this important issue. We believe that by talking with both parents and teachers about their feelings regarding education, and homework in particular, we can learn some useful information which can be used to improve understanding and cooperation between the home and school.

This research has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University and the East York Board of Education but your own participation is subject to your approval. The interview, which will take place at school, will take about 30 minutes of your time. It will involve some questions about how you feel about learning and homework, how you think parents should handle schoolwork and decision-making in their homes, and your perceptions concerning parent-teacher relationships.

The interview will be tape-recorded, but this tape will not be heard by anyone but ourselves, and will be erased as soon as we have completed coding.

All information which you provide will remain anonymous and strictly confidential. Please note that you are free to discontinue participation at any time. If you do agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form on the next page. After the interview is completed, we will provide a brief explanation of the study. If you wish a report of the results, you may indicate this on the consent form.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Tania Sebastian

Michael Pratt, Ed.D., Associate Professor

Appendix E

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate with my child in the research study on homework and learning conducted by Tania Sebastian and Dr. Michael Pratt of Wilfrid Laurier University. I am aware that a tape-recording will be made in the interview session. I also give my permission for the researchers to examine my child's results on the math portion of the Wide Range Achievement Test. I understand that all results are confidential, and that I may withdraw from participation at any time.

NO_____ YES_____

Signature:_____

Phone Number: _____

I would like a copy of the results of this study sent to:

Name & Address: _____

_____

_____ _____

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research study on homework and learning conducted by Tania Sebastian and Dr. Michael Pratt of Wilfrid Laurier University. I am aware that a tape-recording will be made in the interview session. I understand that all results are confidential, and that I may withdraw from participation at any time.

NO_____ YES_____

Signature:_____

Phone Number: _____

I would like a copy of the results of this study sent to:

Name & Address: _____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix F

Dear Parent:

Last spring you were interviewed about your feelings around school and homework for your student by Tania Sebastian, a masters student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. I wanted to write to you now to tell you about the results of these interviews, and to thank you for your help and cooperation in speaking with me.

I interviewed 36 parents from several different cultural backgrounds, and 12 teachers from the school. You will recall that we talked about your ways of decision-making in setting rules for your child, about homework and how you handle it, about contacts with the school, and about the reasons why children do well or badly in different school subjects. You also looked at a standard math test, and predicted how well your child would do on it. Later, your child actually took the test.

We found out that parents from different cultural groups tend to agree with each other a lot on many issues, such as the importance of homework, and the causes for children's school performance. However, teachers and parents differ in their thinking in some ways on these issues. For example, most parents want to help with homework, and have quite a few ideas about how to do this, but teachers tend to feel that parents dislike helping, and worry that they don't know how.

Parents from all groups who stressed <u>joint</u> decision-making with their child tended to have more ideas about how to guide their children's homework, to have closer contacts with the school, and to feel that their role in their child's schooling was very important. These parents see themselves as working together with their junior high school children to help and guide them toward maturity, rather than just telling the children what to do or letting them do what they want without guidance. As well, these parents seem to see themselves in a more cooperative relation with the school.

Most parents reported that they feel positively about the school, but most also wished that children could have more (and more helpful) homework too. In predicting how well children would do on the math test, parents of boys thought that they would do better than parents of girls. But when we gave the test, boys and girls actually did equally well! Many times we all hear that girls have trouble with math, but we think it's important to encourage <u>everyone</u> to do their best, and to recognize that what we hear isn't always what's the truth, as in this case. Girls are good at math too!

I really enjoyed talking with all of you. The information

given above is being shared with the teachers and staff, and hopefully it will make cooperation and communication between teachers and parents even better than it already is. Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and patience. Any further questions or reaction you might have would be very welcome.

Sincerely,

Tania Sebastian

Michael W. Pratt