Annotated Bibliography


Researchers conducted a multi-year (2003-2007) quantitative study of statewide data from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) to determine trends related to support of information and communication technologies (ICT) and variance between low and high SES schools. They identify a digital divide that exists in the accessibility, knowledge, and skills to ICT and the role that schools play in bridging that gap. Studies to determine whether increases in ICT methods at each school level and between low and high SES schools occurred at the same rates were conducted. Through FLDOE surveys, researchers were able to collect information on the indicators of technology integration, school demographic information, and community access and awareness of ICT. Results of the study demonstrated that despite both low and high SES schools at every level (elementary, middle and high school) showing increases in the number of ICT tools used to communicate with parents over the four academic schools years, high SES schools used more tools at every level, as compared to their low SES counterparts. When investigating the extent of community involvement in contributing to technology planning, researchers discovered that despite active participation from diverse communities in their respective schools, over the course of several years, that involvement from low SES schools tended to fade over time.

Data retrieved from FLDOE suggested that few schools made technology training for community members readily available. It appears that high schools offered the most contributions, and low SES schools provided more opportunities than high SES schools. Most schools are increasing the level of ICT opportunities for their communities, regardless of SES, however SES still determines the quality of those opportunities. The study was very in-depth, and the data collected was very useful in answering the research questions posed. Additionally, the information provided in the study regarding the importance of school-community relationships and the success of students was very in-depth and useful in providing a backdrop to the study.


Though the article highlights various types of technologies that are available to augment communication between school and home, the study focused on the use of mobile devices to support communication as seen by students. The article discusses how despite most literature focusing on limitations required for mobile use, technologies such as short message sending (SMS) and multimedia messaging (MMS) allow images and video to support engagement within the classroom. Researchers provided a mobile telephone to students in a year 6 classroom, and
allowed them to use this tool and its various capabilities, to measure whether school home communication was strengthened. With a tutorial provided, students understood the use of the device. Student interviews revealed that parents, recipients of the messages, were interested in classroom activities, and felt informed. Limitations, such as the devices parents had to receive messages were discussed. This study, however, seemed to have additional limitations that were not fully discussed. Since use of the technology was limited, and the types of messages sent were limited as well, the study did not fully reveal how this technology would be implemented without these restrictions. Nonetheless, it appears that further study on these and other communication devices to advance the knowledge of parents to classroom activities, and ignite dialogue between student and parent through information technology, in a more natural setting is necessary.


This article describes a multi-year qualitative study of clusters of elementary schools and colleges where two factors were introduced to determine the extent to which technology plays a role in supporting parental engagement. In one study, clusters of schools experimented with various forms of technology, including providing a computer and internet access to homes, and having teachers post homework online. Training for parents was offered, and platforms were established for teachers to post information or allow students to post assignments. Other sites also provided students with digital cameras, or even invested in technical staff to develop school websites, or to establish email or text messages between school and home. The other study involved establishing a homework project whereby students were involved in aspects of lesson planning, with feedback on submitted assignments available for both students and parents. Schools realized that protocols needed to be developed if technology was going to be implemented for communication. Both studies showcased the importance of introducing, supporting and appropriately using technology, if a link between home and school learning is to excel. The study highlighted the importance of considering the needs of parents when implementing the use of technology to improve engagement and communication. A sensitivity to access to these technologies, particularly at home must be discussed, if any implementation of technology for the purposes of linking the school and home, is to take place. Support for parents and their comfort level with these technologies must also be discussed.


This article examines how implementation of a school management information system (SMIS) affects the learning, behavior, and attendance (LBA) of students and studied the changes in relationships between parents and school and parents and their children. This qualitative study,
consisting of interviews and observations, was conducted in a vocational high school that had an established and successful SMIS over the course of one year. Families with students attending the school before this implementation were sought out to make a comparative study. SMIS systems studied included an automatically generated letter when students exceed a certain number of absences and an invitation to parents when behavior problems are detected. Researchers found that interrelations between parents and principal reduced conflict, allowed for efficient decision-making, and enabled follow-up. Parents overall reaction was positive to the information produces through the SMIS system, though some were concerned with the lack of a human element to the system. For teacher-parent interrelations, teachers expressed positive feedback to access to student information, and the ability to cross-check LBA information prior to parent meetings. For parents, they viewed the SMIS system as progressive and viewed the school as a modern institution. Despite some concern by parents who felt their children became worried when letters arrived at home, overall even those parents reported an increase in cooperation. It appears that SMIS systems, when utilized in appropriate ways to catalog useful information and data, can allow school administration, staff, and parents to all be more aware of the needs of students. More information is made available to allow time for more dialogue and cooperation when meeting face to face. Although qualitative in nature, the study seems to be lacking concrete data to support the study fully. The information provided failed to address larger, programmatic practices, or background on SMIS outside the context of the one school in the study.


This action research project consisted of a classroom teacher creating a web site for parents to use and developing a communication system through email to update parents on student behavior and homework assignments. With studies showing that parental involvement in their child’s school being a high predictor of student success, teachers must find ways to communicate more with parents. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected, including pre- and post parent surveys and student interviews. Overall, most parents appreciated the emails and found them to be convenient forms of communication. Student interviews revealed that despite greater communication, students desired their parents to be more actively involved in their classroom. This project supported the idea that using technology for school home communication has positive results. The article provided little more that a short narrative and failed to provide concrete data. It read as an anecdotal summary of one teacher’s project to increase school-home communication, with little more than parents emails thanking the teacher.