

Summer 1998

An Intergenerational Literacy Project for Migrant Families

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ABSTRACT

AN INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY PROJECT FOR MIGRANT FAMILIES

by

Sandra E. Harmening and Amy C. Kiesz

July, 1998

The relationship between student achievement and parental involvement was reviewed and found to be significant. A model project was developed to include seven migrant families intergenerationally within the context of the classroom. The purpose was to enhance the relationship between students and parents/guardians and between these low literacy families and the school institution. The result was projected to be a better understanding of each family's heritage, an increase in volunteerism at the school site, more interest in school work and accomplishment, and the possible residual effect of parental desire to improve their literacy skills.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the intergenerational family literacy project was to empower low literacy migrant parents to work with students at home. This was accomplished through participation in a family history project that linked parents with their children's education, increased their comfort in a school setting, and helped them sustain their family culture and heritage.

Justification of the study

Action research (see appendices A and B) confirmed the need to involve other language parents in their children's education. This intergenerational project brought parents into the classroom with various aged students to share the relevant subject of family history while involving all generations in the literacy skills of reading and writing. Other valuable experiences were the illustration of the project and the development of computer skills.

Limitations of the project

Migrant parents were chosen as the focus for this project following a discussion with Janine Welty, the director of Special Programs for the Wenatchee School District. The need for intergenerational family literacy was not limited to migrant families but due to funding criteria the scope of this project was narrowed to include only federally

qualified migrant families.

Difficulties encountered when working with migrant families included the tendency to travel over the Christmas holiday thereby delaying the start of the project until later in January. In addition, agriculturally based families needed to be available for longer hours in the early spring. These job related time constraints limited the time frame to between six and eight weeks.

Another limitation was the inability to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of parent involvement. The relational nature of this project made any attempt to gather quantitative data irrelevant. Also any pre/post testing on these primarily low literacy migrant parents would have added an element of stress and would not have worked toward the purpose of increasing parent comfort in a school setting.

Due to the abbreviated length of this project and its narrow focus, the researchers did not attempt to address major literacy issues involving language fluency. However, an effort was made to provide a connection for families interested in long term English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring.

Definitions of terms

Significant terms used in the context of this project are defined as follows:

1. Webster's New American Handy College Dictionary defines literacy as, "the ability to read and write."
2. Intergeneration is defined as, "among or between all persons living at the same time." (Webster's).

3. The researchers included the word family in the title of this project to indicate that this endeavor would include, “ a household, especially one’s own spouse, parents and children (Webster’s).

CHAPTER II

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to empower low literacy migrant parents to work with their children at home. Through participation in the Intergenerational Family Literacy Project parents became more closely linked with their children's education, increased their comfort in a school setting and helped sustain their family culture and history.

The following review of literature was divided into five sections. The first section examines the problems associated with low family literacy and parent involvement. The second section presents family literacy as a solution to the problem. Next is a section which further defines the components of a family literacy project. The fourth section looked more specifically at justification for the Intergenerational Family Literacy Project and the final section examines the development of the project within a cultural context.

Examination of the Problem

In most situations children spend more time with their families than with anyone else. For this reason, if parents want their children to succeed academically they must be active supporters of their children's education. In order to reinforce skills learned in school it is critical that parents take on teaching responsibilities at home and convey an interest in their child's education. "Parents are the first and most important teachers of

their children, and their attitudes convey a critical message about schooling, the work and joy of learning, and the connection between education and the quality of life.”

(Darling,1992, p. 2-3)

Parent involvement is a major predictor of student success. An Even Start pamphlet states that, “Students who reported never or rarely having discussions at home about school studies generally displayed within the low average range of reading proficiency.” (Even Start pamphlet, 1997)

Although many students do come from homes that are apathetic towards education, this attitude is certainly not indicative of all low-income, minority, and immigrant parents. Many of these students already come from homes where education is stressed and literacy is valued. “Research documents that minority, undereducated parents do care about their children’s education.” (Nieto, 1985 p. 179)

“Studies of low-income, minority, and immigrant families show that they often use literacy for a wide variety of purposes, have homes filled with print, and not only value literacy, but see it as the key to mobility. Even parents with little education and limited literacy support their children’s literacy development in a variety of ways.” (Chall & Snow, 1982; Delgado-Gaitan, 1987)

Sharon Darling (1996) summed up the importance of the family in relation to education in her pamphlet created for the National Center for Family Literacy. In it she states that, “The family is the strongest element in shaping lives. It’s the most powerful

support network there is. It's where the cycle of learning begins, where the attitudes of parents about learning become the educational values of the children."

Family Literacy as a Solution

Family literacy programs foster an interest in educational success by providing an atmosphere in which families can work together, each acquiring new skills and education. In their book, Generation to Generation, Brizius and Foster (1993) introduced family literacy as the tool by which families can achieve an understanding of their children's education.

Family literacy is based upon a simple but powerful premise: parents and children can learn together and enhance the lives of each other. When parents and children learn together, an appreciation and respect for education is provided for the children, which paves the way for school success; parents acquire new skills for work and home and a new appreciation of their role as first teacher. (p.7)

Brizius and Foster (1993) put it simply by saying, "Family literacy helps strengthen the family because it brings parents and children together as they learn." (p. 7)

Proponents of family literacy point out not only the immediate benefit to the family, but the benefits to society at large. Family literacy programs recognize the relationship between the educational needs of parents and the developmental need of children. Family literacy has the potential for being the most powerful weapon we have in the battle against poverty, dependency, and under education. (Honorable Wm. Goodling, U. S. House of Representatives, PN)

Family literacy acts as a catalyst by creating an interest in education. This interest may lead to a desire to learn thus leading to a more educated public. An increase in

education equals an increase in employability and self esteem and increased independence from social programs. Once the catalyst has successfully started this cycle it will continue from generation to generation. Brizius and Foster (1993) support this claim by stating “Family literacy can help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and dependency. Family literacy improves the educational opportunities for children and parents by providing both learning experiences and group support.” (p. 11) These learning experiences and group support are precisely the elements that lead to the systemic change addressed by Sharon Darling (1996) in the following excerpt: “The most impressive thing about family literacy is that it strengthens a family and builds a learning team. We are not just changing one generation, but all that follow. We are making systemic change.” (pamphlet)

“Through intensive education of more than one generation, family literacy programs build on families’ strengths and provide the tools and support they need to become stronger and more self-sufficient” (NCFL pamphlet).

Components of Family Literacy

Family literacy may mean different things to different people but many of the core elements are the same. The National Center for Family Literacy lists four important characteristics of family literacy programs:

- Family literacy programs provide developmental experiences for young children.
- Family literacy programs provide basic skills instruction to the children’s parents or primary caregivers.

- Family literacy programs work with parents and children together, helping them to share in the learning experience.
- Family literacy programs bring parents together in peer support groups to share experiences and overcome obstacles to family learning. (NCFL pamphlet)

The Barbara Bush Foundation (1989) outlines the components of a family literacy project in a slightly different way. According to the Foundation components of family literacy are: “Literacy and parenting education for adults, prereading and other literacy activities for children and time for parents to use their newly acquired skills with their children.”

Intergenerational Family Literacy Project

The project incorporated many of the components of family literacy detailed in the previous section. We involved families in a collaborative learning process through the development of their own personal family history album. Through personally relevant learning the researchers aimed to achieve the goal of making parents more active participants in their children’s education and increasing their comfort in a school setting.

The project was designed around a curriculum based approach in which the learner is the center of their own learning and the teacher is the facilitator. This is the opposite of the “Ends-Means Approach” in which the ESL teacher transmits skills and knowledge to the learner. In the book, Making Meaning, Making Change, Auerbach (1992) states,

The message is a simple one: that people learn best when learning starts with what they already know, builds on their strengths, engages them in the learning process, and enables them to accomplish something they want to accomplish. This is the essence of a participatory approach. (p. 9)

By using the shared topic of family history, families gained an interest in the writing process and all participants were enabled to become authors. Goethel (1995) validated this by stating, “When we introduce writing to parents and children, through a cooperative writing project, we show them that they can also be authors, thus establishing a more personal link with the written word.” (p. 9)

Developing the Project within a Cultural Context

Culture and language were both important factors to consider in the development of a family literacy project. “Both children and adults grow into literacy when their experiences and interests are made central. Cultural diversity is not a barrier when each learner’s culture is the learner’s text and context.” (Quintero & Velarde, 1994) Through the creation of a family history album the researchers created a context in which the learner’s culture is of primary importance.

One of the purposes of the Intergenerational Literacy Project for Migrant Families was to encourage families to be more comfortable in the school atmosphere. Dialogue and writing were encouraged in the families’ native language. As discovered in the Project FIEL: Family Initiative for English Literacy in El Paso, Texas,

Some parents and children prefer to write in Spanish first and then attempt an English version. Some parents dictate the story in one language and the children produce a written version in the other language; sometimes children dictate and parents write.

Barrera (1983) and Goodman (1984) confirmed that the making of meaning in any language through written expression encourages literacy. Therefore producing family histories in Spanish would benefit both the Spanish and the English literacy skills for participating families.

CHAPTER III

Procedures

Procedures for collecting data

A literature review was conducted to examine previous family literacy projects. Through this general review the researchers were able to develop a model for the project including criteria for recruitment, curriculum, and assessment. Through action research, with literacy professionals, the researchers were able to fine tune the project model for this specific locale.

Observations were ongoing and assisted in the assessment of the project's success. Researchers facilitated historical writing with families involved, encouraged family-centered art work, and assisted in the editing process. The resulting family history albums serve as an evaluation of the project's success.

Research design

The Intergenerational Family Research Project was descriptive and qualitative . No conclusions were drawn, recommendations are included in chapter five of this document.

The research used in the development of the Intergenerational Literacy Project for Migrant Families(ILPMF) consisted of a literature review and action research. Action research was used to gather information from those familiar with family literacy projects and also from those familiar with our target population within the Wenatchee School District.

Project design

The Wenatchee School District, Department of Special Programs provided funding for the project through the Migrant Program. The federally funded Migrant Program required that all of the participants be qualified for migrant services. These qualified families were already identified by the Wenatchee School District.

Services provided with the funding included the selection of a Wenatchee School District Teacher, materials to create family history albums, access to computers and other technology, food at all ILPMF Sessions, and an artist to complete the albums.

The program was held at Columbia Elementary with the selected teacher, Yolanda Lusignan. Ms. Lusignan assisted in the family recruitment process, along with the Migrant Home Visitors from the Wenatchee School District. Referrals by classroom teachers also aided in the family selection criteria.

The program lasted eight weeks. The program time frame was determined by individual family need and enthusiasm. The development of the curriculum by the two project researchers, Amy C. Kiesz and Sandra E. Harmening, occurred during the first three weeks in January in cooperation with Ms. Lusignan. Examples of family history album pages, family trees, and a family timeline were developed to activate schema and facilitate the creative process.

Project product

The product, family history albums, was envisioned to be individualized family legacies in book form. Each participating family selected subjects of interest within the

context of their familial culture. After exploration and recording, a written product in Spanish both was transferred to the word processor.

The albums were illustrated by family members using selected media. Camera equipment and art supplies are to be provided by Wenatchee School District migrant funds. WSD Special Programs also provided an artist to assist families if desired.

Chapter IV

The Project

The researchers began the project by performing the literature review as stated in chapter two and the reference section. Using the information gathered, the researchers created an action questionnaire (see Appendix A). Next the researchers carried out action research interviews (see Appendix B) to validate the project and assist in the development of the curriculum.

Throughout the development of the project the researchers met with Janine Welty, Director of Special Programs for the Wenatchee School District, to discuss the project budget and curriculum vision. Researchers also met with Yolanda Lusignan, the participating classroom teacher, to refine the project curriculum before beginning and throughout the project.

Prior to the first scheduled meeting the researchers obtained a list of participating families from the Wenatchee School District Special Programs Office. The researchers then attended a migrant family Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting at Lincoln Elementary. There they met with migrant families who would be participating in the project.

The first meeting began on Thursday the 29th of January 1998, with a tour of the host school. Upon returning to our designated classroom the researchers gave an explanation of the purpose of the project and an introduction of all the participants. A prototype album, created by the researchers (see Appendix D), was also shared at this

time. After this brief introduction the families present were shown an example of a family history time line. To facilitate the writing process, each family was given a large piece of butcher paper and markers to begin creating their own family time line.

At the second meeting some families volunteered to share their time lines with the group. Examples of multicultural family stories were highlighted by the researchers. Family trees were also shown to stimulate family discussion and to show possible album content. Families were encouraged to begin story writing. Each family was given a notebook to begin to write. Children were encouraged to help their parents or to begin creating artwork for the album by drawing pictures that supplemented their family history. Families were asked to bring photos and the researchers made colored copies in order to preserve the originals.

The third meeting began with each family pointing out their place of origin and their path to the United States on a map of Mexico. The researchers documented this with photos for the families to include in their albums. Families were anxious to begin working on the computers so the researchers gave them a general overview of how to use the bilingual writing center. Many of the parents had little or no experience typing or using computers. The children were more comfortable using the technology. This was an excellent chance for them to help their parents and to be involved in the writing process. The lack of formal education and technical skills created challenges that are discussed in the Summary and Recommendations Section of this document.

The following three meetings were focused on children's artwork, the writing of family histories and becoming more familiar with word processing. During this time the

Director of Special Programs for the Wenatchee School District, Janine Welty came to a meeting and introduced herself to the families involved. Representatives from the North Central Washington Museum came to request family participation in their upcoming Latino exhibit. Families volunteered to exhibit their albums, to participate in interviews, and to demonstrate cultural traditions. Some of the traditions demonstrated were: making pinatas, paper clipping and yarn art, and by creating quesadillas and pico de gallo salsa, both cultural dishes.

By the sixth meeting some of the families were ready to begin editing their family histories. Yolanda Lusignan explained that this was a process required of their children during classroom writing projects. She explained the phases of pre-writing, drafting, editing, and publishing of the final product. The researchers assisted the families in the editing process. During this editing time the children were involved in completing the artwork to be included family histories.

During the seventh, meeting the families and the researchers did final edits. Specific artwork was aligned with text and the histories were sequenced. The researchers made colored copies of photos taken throughout the project to include in the family histories. The researchers then laminated the artwork and text chosen by the families.

The eighth meeting was a celebration of the completion of the program. The school district supplied food and beverages as well as a gift for all the families. The gift was a children's literature book titled Family Pictures; written in both Spanish and English. The families spent time binding their family history albums and sharing their

final products with each other. Janine Welty attended and congratulated the families on their achievement.

The PAC invited the researchers and the families involved in the history project to be honored guests at the May meeting. The researchers summarized the process and individual families shared their completed family history albums.

The project was also presented to the Wenatchee School Board at the May meeting in hopes of obtaining funding for future projects. Portions of the family history albums were selected for exhibition in the North Central Washington Museum's Latino Exhibit. Several families also participated in the cultural events at the opening of this exhibit.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the project was to involve generations in the public education process. The project provided a framework for future intergenerational projects within the migrant family structure. Using this framework future projects will have a general curriculum design and time frame to draw from. The critical pieces of this framework were:

1. Identification of participants
2. A family-centered curriculum
3. A neighborhood school site, including access to word processors with Bilingual Writing Center software
4. A funding source to provide writing materials and snacks
5. Bi-literate project coordinators

Recommendations

Recommendations for improving the project are:

1. For optimum results, project coordinators should recruit more families than desired in order to account for attrition. This is especially valid if the participants are migrant.
2. A project of this nature with marginally literate families requires at least eight 2-hour sessions. The lack of literacy and low typing skills demanded intense guidance from project coordinators. The extensive editing and slow typing were extremely time

consuming.

3. The researchers advise the addition of more pre-writing stimulation activities to encourage more interaction between parents and children in the writing process. This could be accomplished through modeling with the participants by the project coordinators and sustained pre-writing activities. The extension of the pre-writing process could include oral interviews of family members, discussions of family pictures and photos, and cherished family artifacts and rituals. These discussions could be video taped to facilitate the writing process. Other facilitation activities could be in the nature of memory boxes or family totem art projects.
4. Future project coordinators should provide explicit instruction in the revising and editing process, including some basic grammar instruction. For example putting capitals at the beginning and periods at the end of a sentence, only putting one space between words and two spaces after a period, and how to use the spell check tool included in the Bilingual Writing Center.

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APPENDIX A
Action Research Questions

Action Research Questions

1. Do you see a need or value in an interactive family literacy project?
2. Should the focus for such a program be learning English or getting parents more involved in their children's education? Should the focus be academic or relational?
3. Do you have any ideas for a model project? How long would it be? What would it look like?
4. What would be a good way to recruit families for a literacy project?
5. How would you assess the success of a family literacy program?
6. What other resources do you know of regarding family literacy? Any other projects you have heard of?

APPENDIX B

Action Research Interviews

Interview with Joy Reese

Joy Reese, the Title I Elementary Coordinator for the Wenatchee School District, was interviewed by Sandi Harmening on November 18, 1997 in Wenatchee, WA. Ms. Reese emphasized the growing requirements for parent involvement and family literacy in federal legislated programs. She did not have specific projects in mind to recommend but, she was convinced of the importance of bringing family members into the schools and of the need to involve all families in literacy endeavors.

Ms. Reese stated that the regulations for a parent component in Title I are rather loose but do require a compact with parents at the building level and parent involvement on the Title I Advisory Council. She donated a copy of the Parent Component section of the Title I Handbook from the Department of Education.

Interview with Theresa Shock

An interview was conducted on November 12, 1997 with Theresa Shock of the Wenatchee Valley Literacy Council, located on the Wenatchee Valley College campus in Wenatchee, WA. Ms. Shock told Sandi Harmening that in her experience as the Executive Director of WVLC, an Americorp Volunteer and a high school Spanish teacher she had discovered the “personal connection” is the key to a successful family literacy project.

The Council cooperated on integrated family projects with the Title 7 grant through the North Central Educational Service District and the Wenatchee School District from 1995 to 1997. The results of these projects were mixed, according to Ms. Shock. She identified transportation and the continued participation of the family “driving force” as the major roadblocks to success. It was her recommendation that a project be run between Christmas and spring pruning to make certain that the father was available to participate for the duration. In addition, she recommended per their experience with the Title 7 Family Literacy projects, that one tutor/facilitator be used consistently with each family throughout the project.

Ms. Shock gave the Tacoma Community House and Washington Literacy Council as sites of exemplary projects.

Interview with Tacoma Community House

Jean, who was reluctant to give her last name, is a Family Literacy volunteer at the Tacoma Community House in Tacoma, WA. Sandi Harmening conducted a phone interview on November 18, 1997. The Tacoma Community House is a Methodist mission project in the hilltop area of Tacoma with an Asian community focus. Although they have various outreaches, such as a language bank with forty translators, Jean says they have maintained their focus on literacy. The main family literacy project is an Even Start project which currently serves about 100 students. Another literacy area is Adult Basic Education with approximately 350 students is funded through grants and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

“Jean’s” favorite source of workshops and publications is the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, KY. [<http://novel.nifl.gov/ncfl/NCFLT0P1.HTM>] or (502) 584-1133.

Interview with Judy Cain

Sandi Harmening conducted an interview with Judy Cain on November 25, 1997. Ms. Cain is a fifth grade bilingual teacher at Lewis & Clark Elementary in Wenatchee, WA who participated in the North Central Educational Service District's Title 7 grant for family literacy and had students in the Wenatchee Valley Literacy Council's family projects.

The in school portion of the Title 7 project included GEMS and Galaxy Science components that emphasized hands on and were well suited for the bilingual and migrant students in Ms. Cain's classes. A bilingual anthology and "On-Line" reading. She was very pleased with the results of these programs. The evening, family participation portion, was not as well attended or organized but she saw it as a much needed component.

Ms. Cain was emphatic about the need for a project to have "absolute ownership" of the participants. When questioned about the proposed Heritage Albums she recommended that all art be done by the families and that a Polaroid camera always be available.

Interview with Crystal Bragg

Crystal Bragg, is the Early Childhood/Special Education coordinator for the Wenatchee School District. Ms. Bragg and Cheryl Voorhis spent the month of July, 1997 writin an Even Start grant for the district. Even Start is a federally funded program that emphasizes family literacy. According to Ms. Bragg there are eight funded Even Sstart projects in Washington State. This project is a collaboration between the WSD, Head Start, ECAP and EPIC. It will be housed at Lincoln Elementary in Wenatchee with Cheryl Voorhis as the coordinator. Even Start spans three years of preschool for children ages 3, 4, and 5 with a separate adult education component.

Adults/parents have classes at Wenatchee Valley College twice a week with child care provided through the funding. The curriculum for the parenting classes will be developed by Carla Shear and Kristina Stepper, coordinator, of the college staff. Literacy skills, as well as child development are emphasized as part of this curriculum.

The Even Start grant award came in less than requested, \$75,000 with a yearly renewal. In response to this reduction in funding, the number of families was reduced from 60 to 25. There will be two weeks of concentrated recruitment during December.

The interview with Ms. Bragg was conducted on November 24, 1997 by Sandi Harmening.

Interview with Yolanda Lusignan

Yolanda Lusignan is a bilingual coordinator and teacher at Columbia Elementary in Wenatchee, WA. Ms. Lusignan participated in the Title 7 grant through the North Central Educational Service District for the entire three year period 1994 - 1997. In the interview Ms. Lusignan chose to focus attention on the parent portion of the grant. She stated that for the first year and one-half of the project the parent nights and special productions were very beneficial.

The Cinco de Mayo celebration was extremely successful as a parent/teacher/student collaboration. The Columbia gymnasium was "jam packed". Some of the other successful parent/teacher projects were a family tree; a math project in which parents made popsicle stick multipliers; a storytelling workshop; puppet making; a session to focus on parent concerns; and a parent workshop on special education rights.

Ms. Lusignan observed that the critical element to success was organization and making the sessions relevant by teaching parents what their own children were experiencing.

Sandi Harmening held the interview with Ms. Lusignan over the phone on December 2, 1997.

Interview with Carmen Centeno

Carmen Centeno was interviewed by Sandi Harmening at Wenatchee High School in Wenatchee, WA on December 10, 1997. Ms. Centeno was the administrator for the North Central ESD (Educational Service District) Title 7 grant from 1994 through 1997. She is currently the president of the Washington Association of Bilingual Educators and the principle teacher of the WSD "Newcomers" project.

Ms. Centeno sees a lot of value in interactive family literacy projects, particularly in the elementary and younger years when habits are still being formed. She feels that it will form more of a pattern within the family at this juncture also.

She would vary the focus of the project depending on the family needs and would integrate the learning of English for other language speakers with parent awareness curriculum. She stated that, "a family project should always be more relational since teachers focus on student academics".

A model project would, in her opinion, run for at least five years due to the start up time and the need for authentic impact on student learning and parent literacy habits. "There are many good ways to have a project." Ms. Centeno recommended that recruitment be done in a personal manner using home visits. She would assess success by observing student improvement within the classroom in terms of academics and self-esteem. "Observation should come from both teachers and parents." (Centeno, 1997)

Title VII disappointments for Ms. Centeno were: 1) that they could not find tutors; 2) that there was a lack of teacher and administrator response; and 3) she found three

years to be a too short a time.

Ms. Centeno says her favorite result of Title VII was the involvement of classroom teachers with ESL families. She said it (the project), “created positive attitudes.”

Interview with Judy Trefethan

Judy Trefethan, a retired ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher and current Family Programs Coordinator for the Wenatchee Valley Literacy Council, was interviewed by Sandi Harmening on November 17, 1997. She stated that, "(I) obviously sees a great deal of value and a definite need for such projects. I have had the only model family project that I know of in the State of Washington." Her experiences are that programs should focus equally between teaching English and getting parents more involved in their kids' education. She believes that to do this program curriculum must link academics with family interaction.

Ms. Trefethan believes her WVLC project is a model project. She sets up her programs one family to one tutor. A school based vocabulary is used and the project is held at the student's school site. Ideally, she likes to see a project run year round, but says that realistically a six month project is workable. It is her belief that shorter programs are "stop gap or primer programs" for something bigger. She would build a project of any length around her model, taking into account the abilities and individual family needs when implementing the actual project.

Program recruitment for the Literacy Council has been via flyers sent home with K-12 students since a project goal is to be neighborhood site based. She would also encourage recruitment through community organizations that deal with migrant families and through churches.

"Obviously," says Ms. Trefethan, "there can be no formal assessment — that would be too intimidating and defeat the purpose of bringing reluctant families into the

school.” She has found that informal assessment can be documented through video or a hard product. The other means is via observation of participants and interviews with teachers of students whose families participate.

Ms. Trefethan knows of many projects within this state that provide survival skills for parents and separate programs of daycare and ESL for children. She suggested contacting projects through Washington Literacy, Seattle Central and Tacoma Community House.

Judy Trefethan suggested that we increase the power of our proposed project by tying it to historical literature that is available bilingually and demonstrates the idea of shared stories: *Tell Me a Story Mama* and *Follow the Drinking Gourd* were suggested. She said that in her Motherread/Fatheread project they have done something similar and included maps that help the family chart their path of traveling to Wenatchee. She felt our proposed project could be a “powerful vehicle” for enabling the parents to participate in authorship activities. It was her experience that many migrant and second language parents are limited by the writing process so she strongly advocates for video or simple taping of the family story in conjunction with a book project. It was also her opinion that any art involved should be done by the family with an artist or art teacher acting only as a consultant to help bring out the family’s creativity. Timing wise, she says to aim for early evening and always include food.

Interview with Jean Beard and Mark Foglequist

Amy Kiesz conducted an interview on November 17, 1997 at Pioneer Middle School jointly with Jean Beard Director of the Leap Center and Mark Foglequist Spanish instructor and director of the Mariachi Band. Both Ms. Beard and Mr. Foglequist believe there is a definite need for more family involvement in the school. Ms. Beard emphasized the need to provide child care and food at any evening meetings in order to make the families comfortable. She also provided information on other resources related to Family Literacy.

Mr. Fogelquist pointed out the difficulties involved in working with some of the lower educated migrant parents and the importance of using non-print media to recruit these families. He said that even though these families are quite proficient in their Spanish verbal skills they may have less than a first grade education and may not be able to read even in their native language.

Interview with Madeline Mincks

An interview was conducted with Madeline Mincks, Principal at Lincoln Elementary. Amy Kiesz met with Ms. Mincks because initially, Lincoln Elementary was one of the proposed sites for the location of our project due to it's large migrant population. Ms. Mincks shared the goals of Lincoln School many of which were related to family involvement and to family literacy.

Lincoln School is currently working in collaboration with the Wenatchee Valley Literacy Council on an English as a second Language (ESL) Family Literacy Program. Ms. Mincks stated that there was an overwhelming response from families hoping to participate in the program but only one tutor; this shows a strong need for family literacy programs. With our volunteer efforts and our collaboration with the Wenatchee School District Ms. Mincks believed that our family heritage project, while not a strictly ESL program, would be a benefit to the migrant families.

Interview with Molly Freeman

Molly Freeman of the National Center for Family Literacy was interviewed by Amy Kiesz. She gave general information on how to begin a literature search and how to begin the curriculum development for a family literacy project. Ms. Freeman gave advice on searching for family literacy information on the internet. She also outlined many family literacy based programs at the state and federal level and connected us with resources within the State of Washington.

Interview with Sarah

Sarah, a Vista volunteer with the Washington State Even Start Program at South Seattle Community College spoke with Amy Kiesz about the development of a family literacy program. She recommended several publications specifically related in book making and family literacy. These two publications “Telling Tales” and “Put it in Print” were used extensively in the curriculum development of the Intergenerational Family Literacy Project.

Sarah’s volunteer assignment with Even Start entails gathering information on all ongoing family literacy projects within Washington State. She mentioned that she has, so far, not come across another program which focuses on family history.

APPENDIX C

Family History Albums (examples and photos)