

Exploring School and Family Literacy Connections in a Small Rural School: Processes and effects for Kindergarten students, their parents and the teaching staff of the school

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Dedication

- For my Family -

Nanna and Grandma – Two ladies with the utmost resilience and determination
My Parents, Pamela and Harry – Fostering a love of reading, enabling my education and
encouraging me to never stop learning
My Sister, Penelope – Showing me the humour in life’s little challenges and making me
smile
My Husband, Jonathon – A source of strength and constant patience throughout my
“projects”
My Baby, Esabela May – Renewing my love of reading and appreciation of the simple
pleasures in life

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ABSTRACT

The examination of the existing connections between a small rural school and the students' families facilitated the development of a literacy-based connective program to strengthen these current bonds. The Kindergarten class' primary Discourses of family literacy practices were investigated, with insights discovered about the school's current views of connecting with these primary Discourses. The manner in which previous Kindergarten students' families found out about the secondary Discourse of school literacy practices was also investigated. Case studies were completed by the use of qualitative research methodology, with data being analysed through coding. The Kindergarten students' participation in numerous family literacy events meant that family literacy practices were evident in all students' homes. The events were usually challenging, self-expressive and pleasing for the students. There were similarities between the students' literacy events and those of their parents. The teaching Principal felt it was essential to know that information conveyed about the students' primary Discourses of family literacy practices was accurate. There were existing school-initiated connections that were deemed successful, as well as activities where participants held differing opinions about their effectiveness. All participants were able to identify newly instigated connective activities that were worthwhile and appealing. The project discovered how this small rural school community dealt with distance from resources. Home-school connections can be strengthened through activities which have been designed with specific families in mind.

Certificate

I certify that I am the sole author and that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degrees.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature

Date

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