

Evaluation Brief for the Nevada State PIRC’s K-12 Professional Development for Educators and Staff

One of the Nevada State Parent Information and Resource Center’s (PIRC) main goals is to help parents support their children’s learning at home. PIRC programs target this goal both directly, through parent programming, as well as indirectly, through faculty and staff professional development workshops to educate teachers and frontline staff on outreach and best practices for engaging all parents in their children’s education. During the 2008-2009 school year, 529 teachers, 327 paraprofessionals, 16 school site administrators, and 48 district administrators participated in professional development for Strategies, Research, and Perceptions of parent involvement (SRP), Frontline Communication, and Train-the-Trainer (TOT) workshops on PIRC’s parent programs.

Strategies, Research, & Perceptions (SRP) Workshops

From August 2008 to April 2009, posttest surveys were collected from 155 teachers attending six different sessions of SRP workshops at locations around the state. Nearly 65% of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge of parent involvement from before to after the workshop. Overall, the evaluations were very positive. The majority of participants rated the workshop as “above average” or “outstanding” with respect to practical application and relevance (79%), usefulness (81%), and quality (86%).

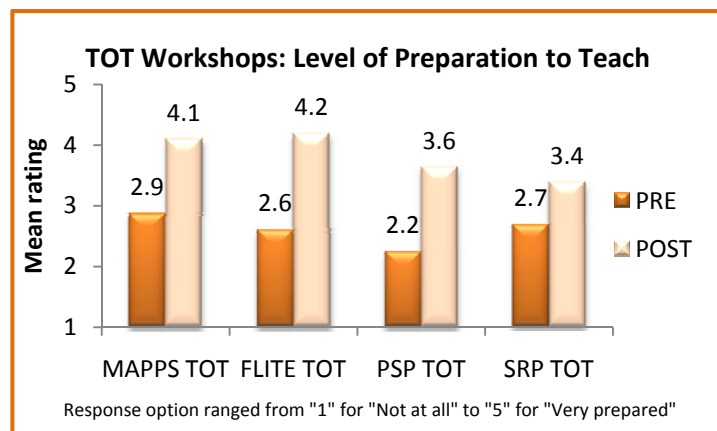
Examples of what SRP participants reported learning at the workshop include:

- Available parent involvement resources
- Strategies to communicate with and involve parents
- The national standards for parent involvement
- Parent involvement can occur outside of the school
- Information about the Latino culture.

Train-the-Trainer (TOT) Workshops

TOT workshops on different PIRC programs were offered between October 2008 and May 2009 at various locations around the state. The TOT workshops covered three parent education programs—Math and Parent Partnerships (MAPPS), Family Literacy Experience (FLITE), and Parent School Partnerships (PSP)—and two faculty and staff professional development programs—SRP and Frontline Communication. Evaluation surveys were collected from 382 workshop participants. Both pretests and posttests were administered to participants in the MAPPS, FLITE and PSP trainings, whereas only retrospective posttests were administered to Frontline Communications and SRP participants. Participants in the workshops were most often teachers (35%), parent involvement facilitators (23%), and parents (17%), but also included school administrators and instructional aides.

Nearly half (49%) of the TOT participants indicated they had “quite a bit,” or “a lot” of experience helping parents teach their children. Sixty percent (60%) reported working directly with parents either “frequently” or “very frequently.” As shown in the figure to the right, participants’ mean ratings of their level of preparation to teach the course presented in the TOT workshop increased from before to after the TOT workshops.



Evaluation Brief for the Nevada State PIRC's K-12 Professional Development for Educators and Staff

- 71% of the TOT participants reported an increase in their level of preparation to teach the course presented in the training.
- Participants in the MAPPS and FLITE TOT workshops found the hands-on experience in the workshop to be the most helpful part of the training, while PSP TOT participants found the CD and other materials to be most helpful.
- More than 90% of the participants rated the TOT workshops as “above average” or “outstanding” in terms of practical application and relevance (92%), usefulness (91%), and quality (91%).

Pre-service Teacher Seminar on Parent Involvement

In addition to the workshops offered throughout the year, 2008-2009 PIRC programming also included a seminar on parent involvement presented in August 2008. Posttest surveys were collected from 65 pre-service teachers at the University of Nevada, Reno who participated in the seminar. The participants had attended seminars and lectures on parent involvement throughout the previous academic year.

Pre-service teachers were asked to rate themselves on three targeted professional development areas: their general knowledge and understanding of parent involvement, their knowledge of the role of the teacher in parent involvement, and their level of preparation to use parent involvement strategies in their future classrooms. The ratings were retrospective, comparing themselves a year prior and at the end of the teacher preparation program.

- 86% of the pre-service teacher participants reported an increase in knowledge and understanding of parent involvement.
- 79% of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge of the role of the teacher in parent involvement.
- 100% of the pre-service teacher participants indicated their level of preparation to use parent involvement strategies in their future classroom was at least “good,” including 68% who reported their level of preparation as “very good” or “excellent.”

Pre-service teacher participants were also asked to indicate which of 13 parent involvement topics they felt were essential for pre-service teachers to know about before entering their own classroom. The top three priorities indicated were parent/teacher conferences; understanding Latino families and their challenges in the school system; and, ideas for working with parents from diverse cultures.

Evaluation Brief prepared by:

Elizabeth Christiansen, Ph.D.



Center for Program Evaluation
Division of Health Sciences
University of Nevada, Reno

cpe@unr.edu (775) 784-4432

For more information about parent involvement contact:



(775) 353-5533 <http://www.nevadapirc.org/>
