Overview

- Project Overview
- What the literature review revealed
- Modified DEMO
- Next Steps
Project Summary

**Goal:** Identify best practices to engage parents in order to equip them to their children’s higher education aspirations

- Specific focus on parents from low SES backgrounds

**Project Phases:**
1. Literature review
2. Modified DEMO
3. Data Collection
4. Website
Literature Review

- Wide body of literature focusing on parental engagement
- Narrowed down by:
  - Academic/peer-reviewed literature
  - Low SES focus
  - Aimed at increasing children’s higher education aspirations
  - Large, meta-analyses
  - Financial involvement acknowledged, but not explored in depth
Parent Involvement

• What is parent involvement/engagement?
  • **Involvement**: parents’ commitment of resources to academic arena of children’s lives *(Grolnick and Slowiaczek 1994)*
  • **Engagement**: partnerships between families, schools and communities raising awareness of benefits of engaging and providing parents with skills to do so *(Emerson et al 2012)*

• Importance of parent engagement
  • Widely understood to be important
  • Reliable predictor of students’ education expectations, better than academic achievement and parents’ educational level *(Bergensen 2009)*
Types of parent engagement

• Epstein’s (2002) 6 types
  1. Parenting
  2. Communication
  3. Volunteering
  4. Learning at home
  5. Decision-making
  6. Collaborating with the community

• Australian Governments Family-School Partnerships Framework (2008) seven dimensions of family-school partnerships
  1. Communicating
  2. Connecting learning at home and at school
  3. Building community and identity
  4. Recognising the role of the family
  5. Consultative decision-making
  6. Collaborating beyond the school
  7. Participating

• Emerson et al (2012) Matrix*
## Types of Parental Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School-based Involvement</th>
<th>Home-Based Involvement</th>
<th>Academic Socialisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Between parents and school personnel</td>
<td>Between parents and children about school</td>
<td>Between parents and children about parental expectations for education and about the value and enjoyment of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Visiting school for school events, participating in school governance and volunteering at school activities</td>
<td>Helping with school work</td>
<td>Discussing learning strategies with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>Creating opportunities for parents to become involved in academic and learning activities in the school</td>
<td>Creating an environment at home that is conducive to learning</td>
<td>Linking school work to current events and other topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting</strong></td>
<td>Building relationships between the school and the parents</td>
<td>Taking children to events that encourages learning (museums, libraries, etc)</td>
<td>Fostering educational aspirations and making preparations and plans for the future</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Emerson et al (2012)
Factors influencing Parent Engagement
(Hornby and Lafael 2011)

Individual parent and family
– Parents’ beliefs about involvement
– perceptions of invitations for engagement
– current life contexts
– class, ethnicity and gender

Child
– Age
– Learning difficulties
– Gifts and talents
– Behavioural problems

Parent-teacher factors
– Differing goals and agendas
– Differing attitudes
– Differing language used

Societal
– Historical, demographic, political and economic aspects of society
Possible negatives

• Misaligned parental aspirations
  – When parents have either much higher or much lower aspirations than
    their children’s abilities and achievements
  – No agreement in literature

• Criticisms of parent engagement
  – Can have negative effect (Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack 2007)
  – “controlling” vs “autonomy-supportive”
  – “process focused” vs “person focused”
  – Positive belief/affect vs Negative belief/affect
Strategies for engaging parents

• Widely studied with numerous peer-reviewed papers, handbooks, guides

• Typology of Strategies
  o General info exchange
  o info exchange on student performance
  o special events
  o volunteer opportunities
  o parent education
  o professional development for faculty/staff
  o parent centres
  o dedicated outreach staff

• Engaging parents of specific cultural groups

• Engaging families with specific situations
  – Parents have not attended university (Eckland 2013)
  – Same-sex parents (Fedewa and Clark 2009)

• In-depth look a specific tool to engage parents, eg technology (Lewin and Luckin 2010)

• Need for evaluation of parental engagement programs (Agronick et al 2009)
Design and Evaluation Matrix for Outreach (DEMO)

- Characteristics of successful programs (Design and Evaluation Matrix for Outreach (DEMO))*
  (Gale et al 2010)
  - People rich
  - Provide financial supports/incentives
  - Start early and are long-term and sustained
  - Collaborative
  - Cohort-based
  - Use a variety of communication/info sharing methods
  - Provide familiarisation experiences
  - Recognise/value differences
  - Enhance curriculum
Successful programs from the literature

Many programs exist that successfully engage parents from low SES backgrounds, but limited number described in the academic literature

- School, College and University Partnership’s Parent and Student Success (PASS) Program
- UCLA’s Futures and Families Program
- The Puente Project
- Latino Parents-Learning About College (LaP-LAC) Program
Key factors contributing to successful programs

– Start early
– Present information in a variety of culturally appropriate ways, including multiple languages
– Adapt to be culturally relevant and address specialised/personal information needs (safety, loans, visa status)
– Facilitate social capital building
– Build critical capital to empower parents by encouraging them to learn about educational inequality and take action to rectify
– Provide explicit reasons for parents to engage, and specific opportunities for them to do so.
Validation Workshops

– University of Tasmania and University of Wollongong
– Participants involved with parent engagement programs
– Methods
  – Qualtrics for multi-block data collection
  – Modified DEMO
  – Reflection and modification
  – Patterns and themes will be identified
– Initial Emerging Themes
## Modified DEMO

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembling Resources</td>
<td>Engaging Parents**</td>
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<tr>
<td>People-Rich</td>
<td>Recognition of difference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>Enhance academic curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cohort based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early, Long-Term and Sustained</td>
<td>Research-driven interventions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building Confidence</td>
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<td>Communication and information</td>
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<td>Familiarisation/site experiences for Parents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarisation/site experiences for Parents and Students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gale et al 2010
Next Steps for the Project

– Six-month follow-up survey
– Paper submitted to Educational Review
– Part of larger suite of programs

Presentation
– Parents matter: Equipping parents to support their children's post-yr 10 education - Marcel Kerrison, UTAS

Poster
– Facilitating school-parent-community partnerships in Tasmania – Sue Kilpatrick, UTAS
Acknowledgments

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– Any feedback or comments please let us know sarah.fischer@utas.edu.au