

SCHOOL-FAMILY COMMUNICATION IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Implementation of education in today's society requires a combination of many of its chains. School achievements cannot be conceived to break away from the family, which gives its contribution too. In order to achieve this, there is a need for a school communication with the family, which is an important process for the school's success and the student's achievement. A traditional form has realized it and has ensured its success, as today it is important to provide a variety of providing forms. Development of society, and also the school have been included in real technological revolution in the last 2 decades; particularly Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Thanks to the schools project, schools in our country are equipped with computer labs and internet, so teachers are trained. On the other hand, the growth rates of Internet penetration in our country, marks a significant increase in over half of the population. Electronic communications begin to take their place in this respect; this option should be used not only as a convenience to communicate with parents, but as an opportunity for rapid, continuous and in real-time communication. In this way, the parents are always in touch with the progress of the child and the school's most important information, but on the other hand the school is able to absorb parents' opinions on various issues of her life.

The study is based on the best achievements in this field as well as on the basis for his reasoning is a study based on questionnaires, and interviews conducted in pre-university education schools in our country at all levels. This paper aims to identify the opportunities and the forms of realization of such communication as well as assess the significance of its use in supporting the continuity in parent and teacher assessments. Recommendations are other important aspects of this paper that will help in changing opinion.

Keywords: *family-school communication, electronic communication, ICT*

Introduction

"Numerous studies regarding parent involvement and student achievement have concludes without any discussion, that parent involvement improves student achievement."¹

¹ Henderson, 1987; Henderson & Berla, (1994) A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student
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Albanian School embarked on a process of reform since the 90s has attempted to change and create another spirit of cooperation. This change, relates to the consideration of family as a partner, which means that the parties must have reciprocity reports, dedicated to fulfilling the duties and responsibilities belonging. Conceptual change and the traditional practices of family involvement, in particular communication is a difficult process and that took time.

The lack of a tradition of parental involvement in education is not a small gap for our school and its relationship with parents. Our schools before 90 s did not see the parent as a partner and an important source of mutual support for realizing the goal of better education of the child. The only obligation of the school in this direction was to inform parents about the child's progress and certainly call the parent at the school only in those cases when a problem in schools revealed the behavior. Sealing of the school was a matter of overcoming ideological and this "wall" was impossible. A parent can not overcome this "wall" only in extremely rare cases and at all, was embedded belief that education matters are exclusively the right school.

While European schools and further American, show another view regarding family involvement in school life. "The involvement of school education is not a new concept; in fact, it is as old as the school itself in America."² "Families and teachers may wish that schools can alone perform its work. But, nowadays, the school needs families, as well as for school families. In many ways this mutual need can be a great help to change ".³

Over the years, attitudes about parental involvement are influenced and developed by a number of factors, among which the most important are mentioned as:

- research and experience in this field;
- demographic changes.

Parental involvement in education grew up as a desire to make parents part of their children's education, but increasingly by ways that school advice. For this reason, the involvement of parents for quite some time was limited in several activities such as fundraising, volunteering and helping students at home. In this line contacts between parents and teachers were set in such way that only carried out in the form of parent - teacher meetings, where the child's behavior caused the crisis stronger, cases in which parents called urgently. Moreover, the communication associated with this type of engagement tended to be biased, mainly from school to family and often focused on teacher evaluations to student performance and recommendations for what parents should do. In this way, success was measured simply by the number of contacted parents, or data that parents served for school functioning and participation in it.

"The quality of interaction between school and family, instead of the amount of contacts, has been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement and behavior" (Patrikakou &

achievement

² Sandra L. Christenson. Collaborative family school relationships for children's learning

³ Rich, D. (1987). Schools and families: Issues and actions

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Weissberg” 1999). For the importance that they have shows to this interaction, many researchers have been heavily involved in this area and have brought numerous suggestions for forms and how it should be accomplished. "Parents are crucial to the success of children during school years". Increased parental involvement is important because of the benefit that brings involvement. According Sussell (1996) these benefits include:

- More positive attitudes of parents and teachers and school.
- More positive attitudes and behavior of students.
- Improved of student performance.
- Increase of the teacher’s morale.
- Improvement in school climate.

This list was expanded with further benefits in 1997 from Karther and Lowden with the following suggestions:

- Students benefit in various fields.
- Increase of the satisfaction of parents according to the school.
- Increase the confidence of involved parents.
- General improvements in school life

Further, in 1999, Ballantine suggests that the positive results that come from parent involvement also include:

- Improved communication between parents and children.
- Better exposure and higher results of children, whose parents are involved in education of their childrens.
- Improve care for school and less disruptive behavior
- A sense of achievement (fulfillment) for parents.
- Higher waitings of parents for their children.
- Improvement of trends towards learning among children.
- Increase parent satisfaction

Cooperation between school and family is not spontaneous choice, but a duty and obligation. What school does not realize that it maner, need to response. Beyond the legal obligation of the school to implement this cooperation was evidenced formalism as in form and content, the rigidity of the school, the wince of parents and distrust of children.

The institutionalization of communication between school and families (where he supported by legal basis), the opening of schools and the creation of a cooperation climate, identification of best practices to our school and foreign ones in this respect are the foundations that have encouraged me, in my entrepreneurship to identify the impact of efficient communication between school and family in the achievement of students and the Albanian context in ways and manners of its realization.

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the process of communication between school and families, ways and forms of its realization in practice and especially school offering various forms of communication where an appreciable role would take using internet communication between school and family. It is also intended to answer some questions, such as:

- Are parents interested in getting involved extensively in communication with the school?
- Are they satisfied with what was offered so far?
- Are Albanian schools prepared to allow more offers for diverse forms of communication, particularly online communication?

Above are important questions, the answers of which this paper will take responsibility. However, even if you could provide answers to some of them, they may serve, in my judgment, as valuable suggestions for improving communication between school and family constantly, in order to better education of children and the promotion of success in their academic achievements.

There are six models in teacher-parent relationships, which determine: goals and strategies;

1. protection model;
2. the expert model;
3. the model of transition between school and family;
4. curriculum enrichment mode;
5. customer model;
6. partnership model;

Let's analyse one of them:

The model of partnership -

Most appropriate model for the relationship between teachers and parents is estimated to be one in which teachers are seen as experts in education and parents as experts for their children. Relationships between teachers and parents can be a partnership, which includes the expertise of each party involved in the control and in order to achieve the best possible education of children. Parents and teachers contribute with various supports in this relationship, thus increasing the potential of the partnership. In this model, parents and teachers work to improve all aspects of the school. An important aspect of this partnership is mutual respect. This requires that parents and teachers to listen to each other's views and then give appropriate consideration to each view. Four key elements in this partnership are:

1. Two way communications
2. Mutual support
3. Joint Decision
4. Support learning at school and at home.

This paper will stop at one of these models, the family-school partnership, focusing the analysis on effective communication between school and family as an important source of joint work between school and families to promote student success. The model of school-family partnership strives to reshape the school environment through two-way communication and solving problems together. There are five main ways to realize and develop two-way communication between parents and school:

1. Informal contacts
2. Contact by phone
3. Various forms of written communication
4. Meetings parent-teacher
5. Home visits

Communication between school and family is considered as a crucial process for the success of the school and student achievement. To ensure its success is important to ensure the diversity of its forms and not to remain only in traditional forms of meetings teachers and parents.

One of the biggest obstacles identified by questionnaires, interviews or school-family communication is lack of time. This fact places by the parents, but also teachers. Insufficient time is the communication barrier can be overcome by providing various forms of communication. Parents encounter difficulty in communication, negative experiences may have been, mentality, etc. parent-teacher confrontation, are other obstacles that hinder communication.

Phone Contacts

Nowadays almost every parent has a telephone and a large portion of households are equipped with landline phones, while schools are equipped with them for several years. Realization of communication by telephone it would be quite convenient and pleasurable by the parents.

This mode can be accomplished in two ways:

1. Parents call teachers

Many appreciate the opportunity to call home or call to be made by the teacher. But this is the problem. When dialed teacher, may be he is in class and will have to interrupt the class, so this should happen in very rare cases, when indeed it is inevitable. It would be appropriate that in these cases the school secretary or a person designated for this purpose, keep a record of messages sent by parents and assure them that the teacher would call as soon as the indeed possible and he should do it as soon as you have the opportunity. Another possibility is that the teacher is not willing to accept calls from parents when he is at home. Not a few teachers think that the time after work and it is time for their families and would not want to bother with phone calls. There are teachers who encourage parents to call if possible. It would be appropriate in this case to determine a mutually convenient time to conduct calls in one hour of the day or on certain days of the week. In this case, when there is an agreement between them, then the parent is sure that the teacher is in the house and that he would respond to his call.

2. Teachers call parents

Even teachers need to know if parents at a certain time are at home or at work and if they are satisfied or allowed to make telephone calls. Although parents are willing to get acquainted with the performance and behavior of their children in school, they are very sensitive towards how the teacher communicates information. In a conversation with the mother of a seventh - grade student, she expressed dissatisfaction with the communication made by the teacher by phone, because communication of teacher had been too hasty, the problem for which the teacher was informed as treat not authenticity and care properly and caused no little concern to parents , but above all to the child himself .

This highly favorable communication opportunities every teacher should use with caution in view of effective communication and not as a way to " vent " or convey concerns to the parent. Turnbull & Turnbull (1986) gives some suggestions for teachers in this regard:

1. Introduce yourself as a teacher of the child.
2. Ask if the time is appropriate to talk, or if it would be better to call him later.
3. Determine an appropriate time to make calls.
4. Be as concise as possible. If the issue requires lengthy discussions, it is better to do it face to face, than on the phone.
5. Use a written list of issues that you want to ask parents or you have to share them informed, prepared in advance of you.
6. Listen carefully to what parents have to say.
7. Give parents time to answer your questions and to think about the things you have been saying.
8. If you do not have the information that parents want, it is advisable like to consider find it and return as soon as possible.
9. Avoid high sensitivity information related to the phone. It is better is that this information is provided so that parents face his rekasioni can be controlled.
10. Always finish the conversation by thanking the parents for the time devoted to conversation and remind them readiness to contact you at any time that may have a problem

Also the phone can be used in so-called "phone tree" as an efficient way to get information from parents. Once distributed the list, or tree of names and phone numbers of parents among them, the teacher is enough to call the first name on the list and then they will call each other to convey information. A small non- profit in this way, is that parents are encouraged to interact with each other which can create prerequisites for creating social connections.

In a cooperation project between the two mobile companies in Albania and the Ministry of Education and Science before 6 years, it became possible to provide the opportunity for communication with parents, teachers and pupils for secondary schools of Tirana and Durrës. The aim was to provide the opportunity to communicate between school and city families everyday for problems of students, a project valued in particular by parents, for the easiest way of communication, but above all for the speed of information. Through his impact was

immediate, especially in participation in learning, but also in a better engagement during classes. Forms of cooperation can be found to provide this opportunity, but that which above all is to achieve a fast time communication, effective and beneficial.

All schools in the country are equipped with computer labs and Internet connection, so teachers are trained to use ICT. Data from different studies and sources have shown a more rapid growth of Internet users in Albania. This option should be used not only as a convenience to communicate with parents, but above all as an opportunity for a fast communication, continuous and in real time. In this way, the parents are always in contact with the child's progress and important information at the school, but in the other side, schools are likely to attract parents' opinions on various issues or her life and information about various aspects of student behavior at home, or and any other available information. This paper aims to identify opportunities and forms of realization of such communication and to evaluate the significance of its use in ongoing support assessments of parents and teachers

In a survey conducted by teachers and parents about the importance of communication between school and family for the achievement of students in the school, realized in District of Elbasan, teachers and parents appreciate communication via internetit as a good opportunity. In the ranking of the forms of communication they appreciate how valuable this form of communication, while suggestions emphasize the need to increase the weight of this form of communication between school and family.

For the reasons of the barriers for communication between school and family, mentioned above, where the lack of time or other difficulties hinder its implementation, communication via the Internet is seen and evaluated as a good opportunity for communication as parents, as well as for teachers.

Internet usage in the country has recently recognized a high increase. By providing the latest findings of technology that can be implemented at any time and in any place communication can be done more effective. Already communication can be accomplished through the cellular phones. Using this opportunity, the parent can be recognized by specific concerns of his child's progress in school at any time, whether between him and the teachers will work this form of communication.

While we communicate with each other in writing all these years, nothing prevents the possibility of connecting via emails or short messages. Social networks are another opportunity to find out about the world around. Through them are finding friends and comrades who have not met for years, and we have not seen ever. It is quite natural to create a parent-teacher communication network, while maintaining course at any time of a communication ethical rules and privacy of everyone.

Because of the barriers to communication between school and family, mentioned above, where the lack of time or other difficulties hinder its implementation, communication via the Internet is seen and evaluated as a good opportunity for communication as parents, as well as for teachers.

Conclusions:

- Communication through Information and Communication Technology brings not only variety, but for above all opportunities for realization.
- Time is another great benefit to both sides, especially for parents. These forms of communication do not require any extra costs (except telephone) and can be implemented in almost any environment.
- These forms of communication are limited neither in time nor in space.
- Schools should provide variety in forms of communication to facilitate as much as two-way communication and above all to be enabling it at any time. In this way all parties are winning, but above all serve as common goal: educating students.

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