Family Engagement by Learning Together: A Program Evaluation of Webinar Series Targeted to Serve Title I Families

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT BY LEARNING TOGETHER: A PROGRAM
EVALUATION OF WEBINAR SERIES TARGETED TO SERVE TITLE I FAMILIES

by

Jaclyn Couch Gibbons

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education
Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. Tamara J. Williams

Omaha, Nebraska

October, 2021

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Abstract

Family Engagement by Learning Together: A Program Evaluation of Webinar Services Targeted to Serve Title I Families

Jaclyn Gibbons, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2021

Advisor: Dr. Tamara Williams

School districts across the nation seek parental involvement to increase student engagement and academic success. Families from Title I Schools, in comparison to dominant culture, may have a minimal opportunity of involvement with their child’s education in respect to partnering with schools in comparison to the dominant culture.

The Department of Equity and Diversity and the Title I Department of the Research School District collaboratively created a four-part webinar series titled

*Community to Classroom Connections* (#C3 Webinar Series) open to staff and community-at-large. The topics addressed through #C3 include Access and Opportunity, Pursuing Diversity, Building Efficacy, and Social Responsibility. Each session is designed to demonstrate an ethic of care focused on inclusion and equity.

This work is a mixed data program evaluation of #C3. The results of this evaluation will help inform District Leadership in future planning of similar events. The evaluation is aligned with Kirkpatrick’s Four-Level Training Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Results indicate an increase in learning in the three topics evaluated. Post-event surveys also indicate a planned action. This shows a behavioral change. Following the Kirkpatrick Model, the #C3 Webinar Series was successful.
The #C3 Webinar Series development process and post-event surveys provide insight into service to Title I Families, within a large, urban school district, with a lens of equity. The process requires systems thinking and strategic planning, behavior change, determining quality content, and logistics and planning through servant leadership. Post-event survey results share themes of value in connection to those who are served, the importance of inclusive language and learning from others, and the development of self-efficacy.
Dedication

To my family, my everything, my heart, and my reason, while this accomplishment has been my dream, it has been inspired by you. You made this possible. The sacrifice was made by us all, and you did so with unrelenting love and understanding. My loves, Rhett and Lydia, it is my hope that you remember this time as Mommy walking into the best version of herself and that you always honor your brilliance. You are incredible people to whom I’m so grateful to have as pieces of my heart. Travis, my constant, my rock, my breath, and my world, I feel that you should walk across the stage with me. You shouldered perpetual sacrifice and responsibility to make this a reality with no complaint. You fueled me when I was empty. You lifted me when my belief had left me. Your selflessness and limitless love sustain me and make our forever together such a beautiful journey.

To Dave and Nora Couch, my parents who knew I would be called doctor long before I knew. You afforded me a childhood rich with love, encouragement to follow my curiosity, and unknown sacrifice to provide me every opportunity possible. Your love of being my parents has never ceased, just as your support. My forever cheerleaders who always know when I need to pick my chin up and keep my eyes on the prize. My blessing to be your child has come with the responsibility of your legacy; to selflessly love my family. I’m forever grateful for your love and your example.
Acknowledgments

While the dissertation is the summit of the doctoral program, I must thank and recognize individuals who were part of or contributed to my journey. I eagerly anticipated every evening of class due to the tremendous content, inspiring instruction, and collaboration and rapport among classmates. The support and reassurance paved the way for beautiful friendships. Specific gratitude to Dr. Ryan Pivonka and McKenzie White. Your guidance, feedback, and endless source of free comedy are exactly what I needed and precisely why we are friends. To Dr. Delanye Havlovic, your support, nudging, and occasional talking me down from the ledge contributed to my clarity and path.

To Dr. Williams, I am truly indebted to you. Your guidance, grace, and understanding of me as a learner were exactly what I needed. Early in the process, you stated, “Jaclyn, claim your greatness!” Those were words on which I was able to cling in my moments of doubt. It cannot be overstated; you are so very good at what you do.

Dr. Kevin Riley, Dr. Janice Garnett, and Dr. Kay Keiser, your instruction, the example of servant leadership, and student-centeredness are shining examples of what I hope to become. Your impact is far-reaching.

To Kerri Murtaugh and Scott Hilger, my leaders and friends, your sustaining grace and encouragement, being my thinking partners, and relentless source of laughs contributed significantly to making this achievement possible. Your daily example of leadership is inspiring and to be emulated.

To Mrs. Tina Forte, coming to know you and receiving your blessing to move forward in this work has been a true gift. Your example of loving your work and with
whom you work is evident and appreciated. Our conversations and your wisdom are a treasure.

Mr. Barry Thomas, my gratitude is abundant. A fearless leader, paving the way to make a difference in a major way, to transform equity in education, and to guide thousands through the work that changes trajectories of lives. Your agreement to allow me to join your journey has been such a rich and rewarding experience and has changed the trajectory of my life and that of my family. You will forever be seated on my personal Board of Directors.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Schools and school districts continuously seek to provide excellent services to students and families in support of student success. For both large and small initiatives, educational leaders review and evaluate their efforts as part of regular program improvement.

Between September of 2020 and May of 2021, the Research School District hosted a district-created webinar series titled Community to Classroom Connections (#C3) Webinar Series in four synchronous, online sessions. The purpose of the #C3 Webinar Series was to build shared content knowledge on topics aligned with educational equity through presentations and dialogue. The targeted audience of #C3 included parents and guardians of students attending Title I buildings, school district community members, teachers in the Research District, and educational leaders in the Research District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed data study was to evaluate the Community to Classroom Connections (#C3) Webinar Series. The results of this evaluation will help inform District Leadership in future planning of similar events.

#C3 Webinar Series is the result of collaboration between the Department of Equity and Diversity and Title I at the Research School District. Both departments seek to meet the needs and provide voice for Title I families. #C3 Webinar Series addressed four topics: Access and Opportunity, Pursuing Diversity, Building Efficacy, and Social Responsibility. “In our context, the four sessions of the webinar series are all pointing to
the overall development of an equitable school district and society,” (Thomas, 2020). The design of the #C3 Webinar Series was intended to create opportunities for dialogue and learning together by all parties, including schools and families.

Parents and guardians of students attending Title I buildings, school district community members, teachers in the Research District, and educational leaders in the Research School District were invited to attend the four-part #C3 Webinar Series. All sessions were delivered online using Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Session agendas vary and may include presentations by local experts, experts from the Research School District, and students from the Research School District. Often after presentations, attendees participated in breakout groups with guided questions led by trained facilitators, and then the whole group closing session. After each of the four sessions, participants received a post-event survey. After each of the four sessions, participants received an end-of-event survey. The end-of-event survey was created with both Likert Scale questions and open-ended questions. The majority of the #C3 Webinar Series evaluation was informed by these end-of-event surveys. Additionally, at the end of the fourth session, participants received an invitation to participate in follow-up interviews. This type of program review and evaluation is part of the Research District’s expected continuous improvement process.

**Evaluation Framework**

The framework used to evaluate the #C3 Webinar Series is the Kirkpatrick Framework. The Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model was created by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959 and has been updated through the years. The details for this evaluation are based on information from Kirkpatrick, D.L. & Kirkpatrick, J.D. (2006).

The Kirkpatrick Framework is a four-level model designed to measure the effectiveness of training. This model is widely used in the corporate world for adult job training. #C3 Webinar Series is similar to a corporate adult training experience. Like corporate adult job training, the #C3 Webinar Series is given in workshop format, focused on specific topics, with an audience of adults, and the desire for enduring learning as a result of the training. Thus, Kirkpatrick is an appropriate framework for this evaluation of the #C3 Webinar Series.

**Image 1**

*Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Training Model*

1. Reaction  
2. Learning  
3. Behavior  
4. Results

(Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006)

The four levels in the Kirkpatrick Framework are further described below:

- Level 1 seeks the insight of the participants to learn how they perceived the training to judge their satisfaction and immediate impressions.
- Level 2 measures topic knowledge at the end of each session, attitude changes, or perceived skill attainment from the participant.
- Level 3 is the extent to which participants change their on-the-job behavior because of the training. In our context, the equivalent is the intention to take action in their everyday lives as a result of the training.
- Level 4 seeks to measure the final results, the financial bottom-line, the business results. In our context, this means the enduring content from the sessions. In other words, the bottom-line defined for the #C3 Webinar Series is the parent perception of the school district, trust, and other content that has stayed with participants after the series concludes.

Kirkpatrick’s four levels are detailed in the following evaluation questions. The evaluation questions will be answered by analyzing end-of-event Likert Scale responses and qualitative review of survey open-ended responses.

**Evaluation Questions**

1. How satisfied were #C3 attendees with the training?
   
   (This aligns with Kirkpatrick Level 1 Reaction.)

2. What did #C3 attendees learn as a result of the training?

   (This aligns with Kirkpatrick Level 2 Learning.)

3. What action do #C3 attendees plan to take as a result of the training?

   (This aligns with Kirkpatrick Level 3 Behavior.)

4. What are the enduring impacts of the #C3 training on participants?

   (This aligns with Kirkpatrick Level 4 Results.)

The remainder of the dissertation is organized in the following sections: Chapter 2 Evaluation Designed Analysis, Chapter 3 Literature Aligned with Results, and Chapter 4 Author’s Lessons Learned.
CHAPTER 2
EVALUATION DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

Evaluation Design

The Department of Equity and Diversity and the Title I Department of the Research School District collaboratively created a four-part webinar series titled Community to Classroom Connections (#C3 Webinar Series) advertised to all parents and guardians in the Research District, especially parents and guardians of students attending Title I buildings as well as school district community members, teachers in the Research District, and educational leaders in the Research District. The topics addressed through #C3 included Access and Opportunity, Pursuing Diversity, Building Efficacy, and Social Responsibility. Each session was designed to demonstrate an ethic of care focused on inclusion and equity.

This dissertation is a mixed data program evaluation of the #C3 Webinar Series. The results of this evaluation will help inform District Leadership in future planning of similar events. The evaluation questions were aligned with Kirkpatrick’s Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The data used was end-of-event surveys and follow-up interviews with parents and guardians who opt-in for this study.

Participants and Procedures

All families in the Research School District were invited to attend the #C3 Webinar Series. Invitation to the #C3 Webinar Series occurs in three ways:

1. Public invitation via Research School District Department of Equity and Diversity social media.
2. Email invitation to Research School District Department of Equity and Diversity newsletter.

3. Auto dialer invitation to 100 custodial families of students receiving Title I services, grades K-12, in 49 of the 106 schools in the Research School District.

Attendees of the #C3 Webinar Series are all invited to complete end-of-event surveys.

At the request of the Research Division of the Research School District, all participants who opted-in for the evaluation were used in this dissertation analysis.

See Appendix A for end-of-event survey consent. The Research School District reviewed all survey data and disaggregated as appropriate for their internal review.

The Research School District then provided data to the Evaluator from those who had opted-in and allowed their data to be used for this evaluation study. Additionally, at the final #C3 event, parents and guardians could choose to participate in a follow-up interview to further elaborate on their #C3 experience. See Appendix B for this invitation and consent letter. Unfortunately, no parents or guardians chose to participate in a follow-up interview.

**Table 1**

#C3 Webinar Series Participant Attendance Who Opted-In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Webinar</th>
<th>Parents and Guardians</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Community Members</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Access and Opportunity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pursuing Diversity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Building Efficacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Responsibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please note these participant numbers are only those who allowed their data to be used for the dissertation version of the program review. The changing opted-in participation number is commensurate with the overall participation count changes.

**Measurement Tools**

The end-of-event surveys distributed after each #C3 Webinar Session is similar to typical end-of-event surveys regularly collected by the Research School District. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the end-of-event survey. The end-of-event survey contained questions on a Likert Scale with a rating of 1-5 as well as a few open-ended questions. In place of `<topic>` is the specific topic for each Webinar Session (Access and Opportunity, Pursuing Diversity, Building Efficacy, and Social Responsibility). If any parents or guardians had opted-in for follow-up interviews, the semi-structured interview questions that would have been used are listed in Appendix D. Both the end-of-event survey and the semi-structured interview questions were collaboratively created by the Evaluator and Director of Equity and Diversity with input from the Research District’s Research Team.

**Evaluation Questions and Data**

The following table outlines the four evaluation questions and the data used to answer each question.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Alignment with Kirkpatrick</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How satisfied were #C3 attendees with the training?</td>
<td>Level 1 Reaction</td>
<td>Likert Scale end-of-event survey questions 3, 4, &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What did #C3 attendees learn as a result of the training?</td>
<td>Level 2 Learning</td>
<td>Likert Scale end-of-event survey questions 6 &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. What action do #C3 attendees plan to take as a result of the training?  
   Level 3 Behavior  
   End-of-event open-ended survey question 9

4. What are the enduring impacts of the #C3 training on participants?  
   Level 4 Results  
   Likert Scale end-of-event survey question 2 *

*Not included in the data for evaluation question 4 are the semi-structured parent and guardian interview transcripts due to no interviews executed.

**Results and Analysis**

Results of all four evaluation questions aligned with Kirkpatrick’s four levels will be presented *per Webinar*. At the very end of this chapter, the total results are then discussed. First are the results of all four levels (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results) for Webinar 1 Access and Opportunity.

**Evaluation Question 1** How satisfied were #C3 attendees with the Webinar 1 training on the topic of Access and Opportunity?

**Table 3**

*Webinar 1 Access and Opportunity Level 1 Reaction*

Rating of Overall Presentation on Access and Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents &amp; Community Members (n=18)</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators (n=36)</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=54)</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating of Usefulness of Presentation Information about Access and Opportunity
Participants rated positive reactions to the content and usefulness of Webinar 1 Access and Opportunity. While still positive, the reaction to the breakout session in Webinar 1 was the lowest rating. This was a point of reflection for the planning group in preparation for the later sessions.

**Evaluation Question 2** What did #C3 attendees learn as a result of the Webinar 1 training on the topic of Access and Opportunity?

**Table 4**

*Webinar 1 Access and Opportunity Level 2 Learning*

Rating of Previous Understanding of Access and Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents &amp; Community Members (n=18)</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators (n=36)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=54)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating of Post-Event Understanding of Access and Opportunity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Community Members (n=18)</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators (n=36)</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=54)</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Difference of Previous and Post-Event Understanding of Access and Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Community Members (n=18)</td>
<td>+.17</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators (n=36)</td>
<td>+.64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=54)</td>
<td>+.48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewing these Likert Scale results, participants rated positive learning reviews regarding post-event understanding of Webinar 1 Access and Opportunity. In fact, the means of all three reported groups showed an increased perceived understanding of Access and Opportunity as a result of the Webinar 1 training. The most growth was noted in the group of Educators.

#C3 attendees’ learning was also captured in the responses to two open-ended questions from the survey.

**Question #8: What is something new that you learned about Access and Opportunity?**

Of 54 participants who opted-in for the post-event survey, 30 indicated learning of the variety of resources that were available in the community and their level of accessibility. While some responses shared were specific to a speaker and their resource, the majority of responses were concerning the overall nature of services.

_I was not aware of the resources available for refugee families._
It was refreshing to learn about the community supports and organizations that focus on promoting access and opportunity to marginalized populations in (Research School District Community).

I wasn’t aware of all that the Latino Center is doing and honestly wasn’t sure of its existence.

There were 9 participants who also remarked on learning of the services available within the Research School District and the partnerships that exist.

I learned that the Research School District Dual Language program is unique and about a variety of resources offered within our community in connection to the program.

I learned of the vast array of community partners working with our Research School District students and families.

I learned that the district is committed to making sure that access and opportunity are equitably enjoyed by all.

An additional open-ended response to answer Research Question #2 was question #10:

What is something you want to know more about regarding Access and Opportunity?

A predominant theme arose from 19 participants regarding additional resources within the community and concern for potential barriers for families.

How can we improve access to families that are not tech-savvy?

I would like to know how we can collaborate. Collaboration is challenging when programs only provide services to specific groups of people.

How do we do a better job of engaging families who do not access information through typical communication channels?
How do we provide access to families when there isn’t an interpreter available for their language?

An additional theme among 12 participants was the application of what was learned, both in the classroom and throughout the community. In response to What is something you want to know more about regarding Access and Opportunity?

Moving to ACTION to close gaps for our families and communities.

How to be involved to help make a difference.

How classroom teachers can be effective in this endeavor.

I want to know more about inclusive language, and how to discover, understand, and meet diverse parent/family needs from a white classroom teacher/school.

How to engage more groups in addition representation to our decision-making centers.

The topic of learning of additional resources available to students and families in the Research School District and connecting to those families was prevalent. Concerning the topic of Access and Opportunity, the open-ended responses support increased learning of the topic, in addition to the .48 overall rated increase in learning per the Likert scale responses.

**Evaluation Question 3** What action do #C3 attendees plan to take as a result of the Webinar 1 training on the topic of Access and Opportunity?

Question #9: When thinking about what you learned tonight, what is something that you plan to do in the next five days?

The overwhelming theme among these open-ended responses was creating a connection with others regarding Access and Opportunity. There were 14 who wanted to connect