Clashes in the Classroom: Grappling with Differences in Parent and Teacher Expectations

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Parent and teacher inputs as complements...

- Children’s education is the output of a constellation of inputs.
- Parents’ and teachers’ inputs are often thought to be complementary (Fryer, 2016; WDR, 2018; Agostinelli, Saharkhiz and Wiswall, 2019).

Many teachers feel there is little they can do to improve child learning when parents’ inputs are low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Zanzibar</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of teachers who agree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Red: do not have the necessary education
- Blue: have too many personal or financial problems
... or substitutes?

- Children’s education is the output of a constellation of inputs.
- Recent evidence for substitutability (Rabe, 2019; Chang, Cobb-Clark and Salamanca, 2019)

*Parents hours allocated to helping children with homework is negatively correlated with school inputs*
Two studies

Study 1: Quality Preschool for Ghana

**Collaborators:** J. Lawrence Aber, Jere R. Behrman

**Partners:** Innovations for Poverty Action, Ghana Education Service, Sabre Education

**Funders:** UBS Optimus Foundation, World Bank Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund, Early Learning Partnership, British Academy.

Study 2: EduqPlus Evaluation

**Collaborators:** Guilherme Lichand

**Partners:** Innovations for Poverty Action, Movva

**Funders:** Jacobs Foundation

Teachers, head teachers, caregivers and children who participated in this study.
ECE participation is on the rise globally, and Ghana is a leader in these trends

**2004:** National Early Childhood Care and Development Policy; KG curriculum developed.

**2007:** Expansion of 2 years of pre-primary education (KG1 and KG2) as part of free, compulsory and basic education (fCUBE).
The policy context in Ghana

• The 2012 Ghana Education Service report that the 2004 KG curriculum is sound, but that teacher behavior has not adapted to reflect new pedagogy.

• Key priorities:
  • Train 27,000 untrained teachers in KG-pedagogy.
  • Engaging parents in schools and raising their awareness of KG-pedagogy.
Quality Preschool for Ghana (QP4G)

- In partnership with Ghana Education Service, National Nursery Teacher Training Center, and Innovations for Poverty Action:
  - Develop and test a *nationally scalable* model for teachers and parents with the goal of improving KG quality and children’s school readiness.
  - Two parts – Teacher Training and Coaching and Parental Awareness Interventions.
QP4G: Research design

6 disadvantaged districts in the Greater Accra Region

Stratification

240 KG schools
(108 public and 132 private)

Randomization

79
(35 public, 44 private)
Control group

82
(36 public, 46 private)
T1
Teacher training and coaching program

79
(37 public, 42 private)
T2
Teacher training and coaching program
Parental awareness about KG learning

Total N = 444 teachers, 3,435 children

Summer of 2015
Measures

1. Classroom quality – implementation and teacher-child interactions
   ✓ Video-taped classroom observations

2. Professional well-being
   ✓ Teacher surveys, School administrative records

3. Child school readiness
   ✓ Direct assessments

Impacts are assessed:

• End of implementation year (June 2016)
• One year later (June 2017)
• Two years later (June 2018)
Implementation: Are teachers integrating practices from the training in their classroom?

Checklist with 15 teaching practices that were in the training. For example:

- Teacher praises children for positive behavior
- Teacher explicitly reminds children of the class rules
- Teacher threatens children with or uses a cane on children at least once
- Teacher uses a “Circle Time” activity during the lesson (i.e., all children seated together participating in unison)
- The lesson consists of a game that facilitated the lesson objectives
- Teacher incorporates found items as Learning Materials (e.g., bottle caps, milk cartons)
- Teacher asks students at least two open-ended questions during the class
Are teachers integrating practices from the training?

Teacher praises children for positive behavior

Teacher threatens children with or uses a cane on children at least once

Teacher explicitly reminds children of the class rules

Teacher uses a "Circle Time" activity during the lesson (i.e., all children seated together participating in unison)

The lesson consists of a game that facilitated the lesson objectives

Teacher asks students at least two open-ended questions during the class

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Checklist with 15 teaching practices that were in the training. For example:
Classroom quality: Does QP4G improve the quality of teacher-child interactions?

Using the Teacher Instructional Practices and Processes System (TIPPS; Seidman et al., 2013)

Developed based exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, we assess impacts on three dimensions of classroom quality.

- **Facilitating deeper learning**
  - Scaffolding (concept development)
  - Quality of feedback
  - Objectives explicit

- **Emotional support & behavior management**
  - Positive climate
  - Negative climate
  - Teacher sensitivity/tone
  - Behavior management
  - Consistent Routine

- **Supporting student expression**
  - Student ideas considered
  - Reasoning/problem solve
  - Connections to life
  - Language modeling
Impacts on classroom quality

** p < .01; * p < .05.

TT = Teacher training; TTPA = Teacher training + Parental Awareness
QP4G improves children’s school readiness, primarily social-emotional development
Two years later: Impacts on children persist

Effect size ($d_{wt}$) of TTPA compared to TT for various domains:

- **Early numeracy**: -0.10*
- **Early literacy**: -0.04
- **Social-emotional**: 0.08
- **Behavioral regulation**: 0.15**, 0.14*
- **Cognitive flexibility**: 0.12*
- **Inhibitory control**: 0.08*, 0.07
Summary of Results

• Teacher training program improves classroom quality, professional well-being, and child development.

• **Persistent impacts** on children’s social and executive function skills of TT two years later.

• **Counter-acting impacts** of parental-awareness intervention, negative impacts on numeracy two years later.

➢ What happened in the parental-awareness intervention?
Evidence that parental resistance was limited to male parents with low education

+ p < .10; * p < .05.
TTPA = Teacher training + Parental Awareness
Follow-up qualitative study with teachers and parents in TTPA

25 Teachers
Topics: KG quality, communication with caregivers, PTA Meetings

25 Caregivers
Topics: KG quality, communication with teacher, PTA Meetings and Caregivers’ Role in Education, Child Performance in School / Goals for Child

Randomly selected from “high achieving” and “low achieving” children.
Key issues raised by parents and teachers

Parents
• Preprimary education as foundational to academic and social development
• Focus on academics and material resources when determining quality
• Discipline is central for socialization, but perceptions about disciplinary practices varied
• Primary responsibility related to providing necessities

Teachers
• Parents pushed back on intervention activities
• Communication with caregivers focused on concerns
• Frustrated with lack of parent involvement
Conclusions

• One of the first impact evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa to show in-service teacher training can improve pre-primary quality and school readiness.

• How to successfully engage parents is still unclear.

• But positive impacts should not be assumed when engaging parents
  • Parent engagement is valuable. However, understanding parent-teacher relationships more deeply is needed.
  • Careful attention should be paid to parents’ beliefs and goals, interpretation of messages, and who would best deliver them.
Eduq+ Evaluation: Cote d’Ivoire (3 key findings)

• School-randomized trial \((N = 100)\) of an SMS intervention targeting parent engagement and teacher support in early primary school.

• Randomized design tested messages to: (i) parents only, (ii) teachers only, (iii) teachers + parents, or (iv) control.

• Results:

  ➢ Positive impacts on parent beliefs and child learning outcomes when engaging parents only.
  ➢ Teacher + parent engagement counter-acted the positive results.
  ➢ Teachers put forth less effort and want to leave their position if parents get involved too often.
Impacts of the Intervention

➢ SMS to parents increase learning by 1-2 quarters and decrease dropouts by 50%

➢ SMS to teachers have no systematic effects

➢ SMS to both parents and teachers backfire
Follow-up data: Beliefs about returns

*When parents engage in school daily, teachers reduce their efforts*

Teacher's effort to x% parents showing up in school unannounced to talk about what their child is learning

- Effort: 1=Decrease a lot, 2=Decrease slightly, 3=No change, 4=Increase slightly, 5=Increase a lot
When parents engage with teachers more frequently, teachers report being more likely to leave the school / profession.
Conclusions

• Features of engaging parents and teacher created unexpected effects in both Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire. It might be optimal to target teachers or parents only, depending on the goals.

• Social norms about the division of labor need to be better understood. Can we successfully align parent and teacher expectations?

• Acknowledging team production between parents and teachers, by carefully eliciting norms and beliefs, seems crucial for the design of successful interventions to support learning and meet the realities of teachers’ and parents’ daily lives.
Thank you

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Intervention I – Teacher Training Program

In-service teacher training
- Led by the NNTTC trainers
- 5-day training at the start of the school year
- Refresher trainings 4 and 8 months later

In-classroom monitoring and coaching
- Led by the district education coordinators
- Classroom visits
Introduction
The Rationale for this training
What we will do each day

Day 1
Personal Objectives
The Brain
The Five C’s for Kindergarten
The Learning Characteristics of Children
How children learn best
Creating A Child – Friendly Environment
The Learning Environment has three dimensions
Learning Styles
The Characteristics of a Child-Friendly Teacher
Teacher behaviour and Child Learning Characteristics Quiz:
Daily Reflection

Day 2: Managing Classroom Behaviour
Pre-Session KWL
Personal Objectives
Classroom Management
Avoid
Anticipate
Respond
Repair
Classroom Management Quiz
Daily Plan
Daily Reflection

Day 3: Language and Literacy
Pre-Session KWL
Personal Objectives
Literacy Wheel
Teacher Talk
Open and Closed Questions
Encouraging Children’s Talk
How Should I Teach Phonics for reading and writing in KG 2?
How Children ‘Recognise’ Words
Stages of Emergent Writing Skills
Opportunities to Write
Print in the Environment
Stages of Emergent Reading Skills

QUALITY PRESCHOOLS FOR GHANA
PARTICIPANT REFERENCE GUIDE

Day 4: Mathematics
Pre-Session KWL
Personal Objectives
Concepts in Maths
Language of maths for KG
Emergent Number Skills
Maths Quiz
Daily Reflection

Day 5: Assessment and Planning
Pre-Session KWL
Personal Objectives
Pupil Record for KG1 (adapted)
Pupil Record for KG2 (adapted)
Guidance on how to observe and record Pupil Record Points
Daily Session Plan
Example Completed Daily Session Plan
Teacher Self-Assessment and Monitoring Tool
Reflections on the Teacher Monitoring Tool
Daily Reflection
Intervention II – Parental Awareness Program

3 sessions of parental awareness meetings (1/term) implemented through PTA meetings

Video screening

Discussion with focus on:
(1) play-based learning,
(2) parents’ role in child learning, and
(3) encouraging parent-teacher and parent-school communication
References


Analytic strategy: Impact analysis

Level 1 (Child) Model:
\[ Y_{ijk} = B_{0jk} + B_{1jk} X_{ijk} + e_{ijk} \]
Where \( X_{ijk} \) is the vector of child covariates

Level 2 (Teacher) Model:
\[ B_{0jk} = \gamma_{00k} + u_{0jk} \]
Where \( B_{0jk} \) is the teacher-level random intercept.

Level 3 (School) Model:
\[ \gamma_{00k} = \pi_{000} + \pi_{001} T_{k} + \pi_{002} Z_{k} + v_{00k} \]
Where \( \gamma_{00k} \) is the school-level random intercept; \( Z_{k} \) is the vector of school-level covariates; and \( T_{k} \) is the treatment status assigned to the school.

Covariates: within sample mobility dummies; district dummies; baseline scores; child gender, child age, grade (KG1 vs. KG2), public/private sector.

Attrition: Missing data imputed using a large range of covariates, outcome variables, and treatment status according to WWC standards (WWC, 2014).
Differences by public and private sectors

• In the 9 outcomes assessed, we find two significant difference in public and private sector schools.
  • Impacts on reduced teacher burnout are larger in private schools.
  • Impacts on reduced teacher attrition occur in private schools only.

• No major differences in how QP4G impacted classroom quality and children’s outcomes in public or private schools.

• But significant differences in improving teacher well-being.
## Two years later: Sustained impacts on some domains of development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Sample items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td>Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA; RTI, 2009); IDELA</td>
<td>Oral vocabulary, Nonword decoding, Listening comprehension (English, local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letter-sound ID, Phonological awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td>Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA; RTI, 2009)</td>
<td>Number ID, Addition &amp; subtraction, Missing numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity discrimination, Word problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social-emotional</strong></td>
<td>IDELA (Pisani et al., 2018)</td>
<td>Emotion identification, Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict resolution, Personal awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive function</strong></td>
<td>Scale8 (Obradovic et al., 2019)</td>
<td>Working memory, Cognitive flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reaction time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social competence</strong></td>
<td>SCS-Teacher Report (Conduct Problems Prevention Group, 1990)</td>
<td>Prosocial behaviors, Academic behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior regulation</strong></td>
<td>Adapted Preschool Self-Regulation Assessment (PSRA; Smith-Donald, et al. 2007)</td>
<td>Attention and behaviors (e.g., pays attention during instructions and demonstrations; shows intense angry/irritable feelings and/or behaviors)</td>
</tr>
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## Attrition Across Waves 1-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children</th>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Midline</td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>931 (78.9%)</td>
<td>812 (68.8%)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>1,025 (87.8%)</td>
<td>926 (79.4%)</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTPA</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>1,019 (94.7%)</td>
<td>919 (84.4%)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>2,657</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A framework for examining persistence and fadeout in interventions (Bailey, Duncan, Odgers & Yu, 2017)

“Trifecta” skills

1. Malleable
2. Fundamental
3. Would not have developed eventually in the absence of the intervention
Sample

• Schools were randomly sampled from six “disadvantaged” districts in the Greater Accra Region based on 2015 UNICEF’s District League Table created in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

• Ranks Ghana’s 216 Districts by their level of development and service delivery based on 6 key sectors - health, education, sanitation, water, governance and security - to compile a single score for each District.

✓ La Nkwantanang-Madina
✓ Ga Central
✓ Ledzokuku-Krowor
✓ Adenta
✓ Ga East
✓ Ga South
Moderation of impact estimates on literacy and numeracy by classroom quality and teacher burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructional support</th>
<th>Emotional support</th>
<th>Teacher burnout</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>(SE)</td>
<td>p-value</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTPA</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT*Moderator</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTPA*Moderator</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTPA</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT*Moderator</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTPA*Moderator</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents value preprimary education

Academic foundation
“Those who go early at two years, around two years, they perform normally academically better than those that wait.”
“Kids who attend crèche and nursery, when asked questions they are able to answer, unlike children who did not attend preschool, they are not able to do anything.”

Behavior socialization
“Those who do go to the preschool are more obedient and respectful than those who did not attend preschool”
“The one who is going to school behaves a little more decent”
“They are respective, they act like they are really students they act like they really taught them good manners in school.”
Parents pushed back on integrating proactive, positive behavior management practices

“When the topics were discussed, some of them did not agree. They were like ‘I gave birth to my child so why shouldn’t I beat him if the child is misbehaving?’”

“Like getting the child some learning materials so that as they are playing they can be learning at the same time. And sometimes they have to stop using the cane but a parent voiced out and said that her kids are stubborn so without the cane... So I told her that with some parents they said the kids are always happy whenever they are around so they should avoid the cane and they will be fine.”
Teachers often feel frustrated when they attempt to communicate with and involve parents

• The types of relationships between teachers and caretakers vary greatly. While some teachers rely on caretakers’ assistance, others are suspicious of some parents.

“...if I want to see them to discuss something with them even, you can’t see them-maybe you will say when you go home, call your mother or father to come, they won’t come”

“[Y]our irresponsible parent who left you here and careless about you (says in local dialect). Then beating the child, assaulting them; I have nothing, I have no book for you.”
Example message to parents

**WEEK 1**

Motivating fact

Eduq+: Corporal punishment has been shown to make children LEARN LESS in school. Building respect through CONVERSATION works better!

Activity

Eduq+: Next time your child behaves in a way you do not approve of, try having a serious conversation instead of using corporal punishment. Notice how she reacts, and notice how you feel about the change.

**WEEK 2**

Growth message

Eduq+: Do not have conversations just this once; consistency is key! Whenever your child misbehaves, try to stick to the conversation method and see your relationship improve!

Interactivity

Eduq+: Did you have a chance to use conversation instead of corporal punishment as a disciplining method? If so, tell us how you felt and how your child reacted. Would you keep doing it moving forward?
Example message to teachers

**WEEK 1**

**Motivating fact**

Eduq+: Corporal punishment has been shown to make children LEARN LESS in school. Building respect through CONVERSATION works better!

**Activity**

Eduq+: Next time your student behaves in a way you do not approve of, try having a serious conversation instead of using corporal punishment. Notice how she reacts, and notice how you feel about the change.

**WEEK 2**

**Growth message**

Eduq+: Do not have conversations just this once; consistency is key! Whenever your students misbehave, try to stick to the conversation method and see your relationship improve!

**Interactivity**

Eduq+: Did you have a chance to use conversation instead of corporal punishment as a disciplining method? If so, tell us how you felt and how your students reacted. Would you keep doing it moving forward?
Impacts on parent beliefs

- Nudges to either parents or teachers make parents more optimistic about their children’s learning and less likely to adopt physical punishment.

- Nudges to both overturn those results.