Strategies to build home/school computer literacy for primary school age children and families who are English Language Learners.

Technology continues to impact the educational landscape, both in school and at home. Computer literacy is taking its place with both language arts and mathematics as essential life skills to work in the ever-changing information age.

This emphasis mirrors that which was placed on reading skills. Parents who are not literate in either a first or second language are unable to provide the home support for school literacy, assisting with homework assignments, obtaining information from simple print resources such as a newspaper or phone book. This same concern about family support exists in the area of computer literacy as well. Though many homes have a personal computer, there remains a significant lack of computer literacy in homes of children from minority cultures. Children without appropriate computer literacy face significant limitations both during school and beyond.

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies teachers of English Language Learners are utilizing to increase the computer literacy of both their students and families. Additional information was obtained via parent interview (in home language when necessary) regarding what types of computer instruction appear to increase their desire to learn computer basics and move to more complex applications. While most parents revealed they enjoyed joint demonstration classes with their child and his/her teacher, actual “hands-on” activities were preferred with support and guidance from other parents (without their or teacher involved). Additional information was obtained from teachers and school administrators, and other community members regarding “best practices” for computer literacy training (schools and other places in the community such as libraries, realtor offices, small business schools, etc). An extensive list teaching strategies and guidelines for home/school and parent to parent support are also included.