Reimagining Community-Engaged Research Design Methods at the UIC Center for Literacy: The Read, Make & Play family literacy initiative study as example

Introduction
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Methodology
In 2019, Dr. Baker-Doyle joined UIC as the Director of CFL (and faculty member in the College of Education), and created a CFL research taskforce made up of practitioners, graduate student researchers and instructors, and scholars at CFL to reimagine our research model. She provided limits that she wanted to turn toward a more community-engaged, strength-based approach in her research. Dr. Baker-Doyle and colleagues identified two key principles to guide their research design (available to read at: https://cfl.uic.edu/overview/red/).

An example of these four research principles in action is in CFL’s Read, Make & Play study, which used a Design-Based Implementation Research (DBIR) approach to examine how parents shared learning and literacy with their children. The Read, Make & Play (RMP) study as example

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In line with the DBIR research approach and CFL research principles, RMP practitioners and university faculty/students were co-researchers, and use a repetitious approach to implementation, research, and theory-building (Fishman, et al, 2013). Study participants included 32 parents of children aged 0-5 who participated in a six-week program which met once a week. Seventeen of the 32 parents spoke Spanish as their first language. Study data sources included a pre-and post-program survey, weekly check-in surveys, meeting observations, and individual interviews.

Conclusion
The results of the RMP study gives insight into the impact of this design on parents’ co-construction of knowledge about learning and literacy, and offers results that will help with theory development. Dr. Baker-Doyle and colleagues identified two key themes: (1) parents shifted their understandings of literacy from ‘literacy as schoolwork’ to ‘literacy as home,’ and (2) parents began to see each other as valuable resources for literacy practices. These findings demonstrate a collective uncovering of parents’ community cultural wealth. In future research the team hopes to continue to repeat upon its program design, using these research findings and expand to working with schools to help build better home-school connections based on what we learn through their research.

About Our Researcher
Dr. Kira Baker-Doyle is the Director of the Center for Literacy and Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is known internationally for her innovative work in teacher professional development and community engagement, particularly in the areas of literacy, technology, and connected learning. She is the author of several books on these topics, including, Transformative Teachers: Teacher Leadership and Learning in a Connected World (Harvard Education, Press, 2017), as well as a range of scholarly publications.

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Sharing What We Have Learned
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Sharing What We Have Learned is sponsored by the Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, Healthy City Collaborative, and the Office of Health Literacy, Prevention, and Engagement. We are pleased to highlight research and community engagement activities of CFL researchers. Each month we feature a researcher and important findings from their work. This information is shared in a ready to use format suitable for widespread distribution to those who would most benefit from the research findings. If you would like more information about our efforts to share what we have learned, visit our website at http://oceanhp.uic.edu or email sabrina1@uic.edu.