Students' Stories as a Means of Enhancing Parental Involvement in School

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Abstract
This article investigates the role of student narratives as a means to enhance parental involvement in schools, focusing specifically on conflict resolution with teenagers. Drawing on a seminar organized at a local Parents' School, the study engaged parents in an online workshop in which they worked with real, anonymized narratives from students describing conflict situations at home. These narratives were used as practical tools that enabled parents to apply conflict resolution theories and strategies collaboratively, striving for a deeper understanding of adolescent perspectives. The article includes empirical findings based on a thematic analysis of parents' reflections and group discussions during the seminar, identifying key themes such as empathy, boundary-setting, communication, collaborative problem solving, and emotional self-regulation. By bridging theory and practice through both narrative pedagogy and empirical data, the study demonstrates the transformative impact of student stories on parent-teacher relationships and provides insights for future parental education initiatives.

Key words: parental involvement; narrative pedagogy; parents' school

Introduction

Parental involvement in a child's education has long been recognized as a significant factor contributing to academic success and personal development. Decades of research have demonstrated that when parents are actively engaged in their children's school life, the results can include higher academic achievement, better social skills, and improved emotional well-being (Epstein, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2001). However, engaging parents of adolescents presents unique challenges. During adolescence, as children seek more independence and autonomy, parents may struggle to find effective ways to remain involved without seeming intrusive or controlling (Hill & Tyson, 2009). This period often leads to increased conflict between parents and their children as they navigate shifting boundaries and developmental changes.

The teenage years, marked by cognitive, emotional, and social transformations, frequently bring heightened tensions between parents and children. Conflicts during this phase are common, particularly around issues such as autonomy, responsibilities, peer relationships, and academic performance (Smetana, 2011). While these conflicts are a normal part of adolescence, the way they are handled can significantly impact the parent-child relationship. Poorly managed conflicts can lead to emotional distance, strained communication, and even mental health issues for both parents and adolescents (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Conversely, constructive conflict resolution has been shown to promote healthier family dynamics, better emotional regulation, and increased adolescent resilience (Laursen & Hafen, 2010).

Parental education programs have increasingly focused on helping parents develop strategies for effective conflict resolution, empathetic communication, and maintaining supportive involvement during adolescence. However, many of these programs fail to fully engage parents, especially when it comes to understanding the unique perspectives and emotional experiences of their adolescent children. One innovative approach to bridging this gap is the use of students' stories or narratives. By incorporating real-life narratives of adolescent experiences, educators can provide parents with a deeper understanding of their children's inner worlds, particularly regarding conflicts that arise at home. This method allows

parents to "step into the shoes" of their teens, fostering empathy and improving their ability to manage conflicts constructively (Bruner, 1991).

The use of narratives in education, known as narrative pedagogy, has been shown to enhance learning by connecting theoretical concepts with lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the context of parental education, this approach holds particular promise. Adolescents' stories of conflict with their parents offer a window into the emotional and psychological realities of teenage life, allowing parents to reflect on their own behaviors and attitudes. Through this process, parents are better equipped to apply conflict resolution strategies and empathize with their children's struggles, leading to improved communication and stronger relationships (Green et al., 2006).

The current study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on parental involvement during adolescence by exploring how narrative pedagogy can be applied to improve parental conflict management strategies. The article will review the theoretical foundations of parental involvement, the nature of parent-adolescent conflict, and the potential for narrative-based interventions to foster empathy and behavioral change. Following the theoretical discussion, the empirical section will describe the methodology and outcomes of the seminar, highlighting how the use of student narratives impacted parents' approaches to conflicts with their adolescents. Through this study, we seek to offer practical insights into how schools and educators can engage parents in meaningful ways that enhance family relationships and support adolescent development.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it seeks to examine the effectiveness of using student narratives as a pedagogical tool in parental education programs, particularly in addressing parent-adolescent conflicts. Second, it aims to explore how parents can apply theoretical frameworks of conflict resolution in practical settings when provided with real-life examples from their children's perspective. By presenting these findings, the article contributes to the ongoing discourse on how schools can foster meaningful parental involvement during the challenging adolescent years, promoting stronger parent-child relationships and improving adolescent well-being.

Theoretical framework
Parental involvement in education and adolescent development

Parental involvement in education is widely regarded as a critical determinant of a child's academic success, motivation, and social development. Historically, much of the research in this area has focused on younger children, with findings demonstrating that engaged parents lead to better academic outcomes, higher self-esteem, and lower dropout rates (Fan & Chen, 2001). However, as children enter adolescence, parental involvement tends to decrease as the child strives for autonomy and independence (Hill & Tyson, 2009). This decline in involvement is particularly concerning as adolescence is a crucial developmental stage marked by heightened social pressures, emotional volatility, and significant cognitive changes.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of maintaining a positive parental presence during adolescence, even if the nature of this involvement changes (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). Parents of adolescents need to shift from being directive to supportive, offering guidance without being overly controlling. This "autonomy-supportive" form of parental engagement has been shown to foster better emotional regulation in adolescents, greater academic motivation, and healthier identity formation (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Adolescence is also characterized by more frequent conflicts between parents and children, primarily due to the developmental task of individuation. As teenagers seek to establish their identity and independence, disagreements around issues such as privacy, academic responsibilities, social relationships, and household rules intensify (Smetana, 2011). While conflict is a normal part of this developmental phase, how parents handle these conflicts can either enhance or undermine their relationship with their teen (Laursen & Collins, 2009).

Research on conflict resolution in the family context suggests that parents who engage in collaborative problem-solving, validate their adolescent's perspective, and avoid authoritarian approaches tend to foster better outcomes, including improved communication and a more secure parent-child relationship (Van Doorn et al., 2011). Conversely, highly controlling or disengaged parenting styles can exacerbate conflicts, leading to emotional estrangement and even academic or behavioral issues (Steinberg, 2001).

The nature of parent-adolescent conflict

Conflicts between parents and adolescents are inevitable and developmentally appropriate as young people navigate their growing need for autonomy. According to Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, adolescence is marked by the conflict between identity and role confusion, where teenagers seek to explore and assert their personal values, beliefs, and identities (Erikson, 1968). This process often involves pushing against parental boundaries, leading to disagreements, particularly over issues related to freedom, social interactions, and personal responsibilities (Smetana et al., 2006).

Research distinguishes between constructive and destructive conflicts. Constructive conflicts, where both parties express their feelings and work toward mutual understanding, tend to lead to better emotional outcomes for adolescents and healthier family dynamics (Laursen & Hafen, 2010). On the other hand, destructive conflicts, characterized by hostility, withdrawal, and escalated tension, can have long-term negative effects, including increased adolescent anxiety, depression, and reduced academic performance (Smetana et al., 2006). Parents who engage in active listening, validate their children's feelings, and approach conflicts with an open mindset help adolescents develop emotional regulation and negotiation skills (Collins & Laursen, 2004).

Theories of conflict resolution, such as Thomas-Kilmann's conflict mode instrument, which identifies five conflict-handling styles (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating), have been applied to parent-adolescent interactions. Parents who adopt collaborative approaches—working with their adolescent to find mutually satisfying solutions—tend to have better long-term relationships with their children (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). This collaboration aligns with principles of democratic parenting, which emphasizes shared decision-making and respect for the adolescent's growing autonomy (Baumrind, 1978).

Role of empathy and perspective-taking in conflict resolution

Empathy and perspective-taking are central to resolving conflicts and fostering deeper relationships between parents and adolescents. Empathy, defined as the ability to understand and share another person's feelings, is essential in bridging the communication gap that often arises in parent-teen interactions (Davis, 1983). Adolescents, with their developing cognitive abilities, are increasingly able to understand multiple perspectives, but they also face emotional turbulence, making it difficult to manage their feelings during conflicts (Kuhn, 2009).

From the parental side, empathy involves stepping into the adolescent's shoes to understand their point of view, particularly in conflict situations. Parents who demonstrate empathy during conflicts are more likely to de-escalate tension and create an environment where their adolescent feels heard and respected (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2004). Studies show that when parents make an effort to understand their children's perspectives, adolescents are more likely to reciprocate, leading to more effective conflict resolution and improved relationship satisfaction (Gottman, 1997).

Additionally, research on perspective-taking suggests that when parents practice this cognitive skill—actively considering their child's viewpoint—they are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote positive developmental outcomes. Perspective-taking enhances parents' ability to navigate conflicts in a way that balances guidance with respect for their

child's autonomy (Galinsky, 2002). Programs that teach parents empathy and perspective-taking have demonstrated success in reducing family conflict and improving adolescent well-being (Sillars et al., 2004).

Narrative Pedagogy: Enhancing learning through stories

Narrative pedagogy, or the use of storytelling as a teaching method, has gained traction in educational and psychological research due to its effectiveness in fostering reflection, emotional engagement, and practical application of knowledge. Stories serve as powerful tools for making abstract concepts more concrete and relatable, allowing individuals to internalize theoretical ideas through lived experiences (Bruner, 1991). In the context of parental education, using real or simulated narratives of adolescent experiences can provide a unique window into the inner world of teenagers, helping parents understand the emotional and psychological complexities their children navigate daily (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The concept of narrative learning is grounded in constructivist theories of education, which suggest that individuals learn best when they can relate new information to their own experiences and emotions (Vygotsky, 1978). Stories tap into this cognitive-emotional nexus, allowing parents to see their child's struggles in a new light, which can be particularly valuable in addressing conflictual or strained relationships (Diekelmann, 2001).

Narratives also play a role in fostering critical reflection. According to Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, stories can lead to a "disorienting dilemma" where individuals are forced to confront their assumptions and re-evaluate their responses to situations (Mezirow, 1997). In the context of parent-adolescent conflicts, reading students' narratives can trigger such dilemmas for parents, pushing them to reconsider their parenting approaches and develop new, more empathetic strategies.

Students' stories as tools for parental reflection and behavioral change

Using students' narratives to foster empathy and reflective learning in parents is an innovative approach to parental education. Stories are inherently engaging and emotionally resonant, which can help parents connect with the material in a more meaningful way than abstract theoretical instruction alone. When parents read or hear the authentic voices of adolescents describing their struggles with parental conflict, they are more likely to experience empathy and reflect on their own behaviors (Green et al., 2006). This experiential learning process is particularly powerful when dealing with emotionally charged topics like conflict and autonomy.

Empirical research supports the idea that narratives can be transformative in educational settings. A study by Green and Brock (2000) on the "transportation" effect of narratives—where readers become mentally absorbed in a story—demonstrated that individuals who engage deeply with stories are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviors in response. In the context of parent education, parents who are "transported" into the world of the adolescent through narratives are more likely to develop empathy and reconsider their conflict management strategies (Mar et al., 2006).

Moreover, incorporating narratives into educational workshops allows for a balance between theory and practice. While theoretical models of adolescent development and conflict resolution provide parents with valuable frameworks, narratives bring these theories to life by illustrating the real-world challenges that teenagers face (Diekelmann, 2001). For instance, a parent's understanding of autonomy-supportive parenting may be enhanced when they read a story of a student who struggles with feelings of control and rebellion due to parental overreach. By examining the narrative through the lens of theory, parents can more effectively apply the concepts to their own interactions with their children (Smetana et al., 2006).

The transformative potential of narratives also aligns with contemporary psychological theories on emotional intelligence and social cognition. Stories activate areas of the brain

involved in social processing, which helps parents better understand and respond to their adolescent's emotions (Mar et al., 2006). Additionally, engaging with narratives can promote self-reflection, leading parents to recognize the emotional triggers and behavioral patterns that contribute to conflict escalation (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2004).

Utilizing students' stories for parental engagement in conflict resolution

In order to create a meaningful experience for parents in learning conflict resolution strategies, the seminar I organized at the local Parents' School was designed as an interactive, online workshop, aiming to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application through the power of storytelling. This seminar, titled "Conflict Resolution with Teenagers through Students' Narratives," centered on helping parents engage with real-life conflict scenarios as narrated by teenagers themselves, ultimately enhancing their involvement in school life and their understanding of adolescent perspectives.

The seminar commenced with an introductory presentation that outlined key theoretical concepts in conflict resolution, tailored specifically for conflicts that arise between teenagers and parents. Drawing on established models, I introduced fundamental strategies such as active listening, empathy, perspective-taking, and collaborative problem-solving. The theoretical portion also covered common triggers in adolescent-parent conflicts—such as issues of autonomy, trust, and communication barriers—and highlighted how adolescents often perceive these conflicts. This grounding helped frame parents' understanding of why conflict arises and how it may escalate if left unresolved or mishandled.

The presentation was interactive, allowing parents to ask questions and share brief anecdotes or struggles they faced in communicating with their children. This section was essential in establishing a shared language and reference point for the activities that followed, as parents began to recognize patterns and triggers in conflicts within their own families.

Following the theoretical segment, I introduced the main activity: the exploration of anonymized student narratives. These stories had been carefully selected to provide a diverse range of scenarios, each depicting a different type of conflict situation that teenagers commonly experience with their parents. The stories included instances of typical teenage defiance, communication breakdowns, and conflicts over boundaries, responsibilities, and trust. Each story was anonymized to ensure confidentiality, but retained a level of rawness and authenticity, which helped parents engage deeply and relate personally.

These narratives served as a bridge between theory and practice, offering parents a window into the real emotional landscapes and experiences of adolescents in conflict situations. The students' words allowed parents to see conflicts from their children's perspective, underscoring the importance of empathy and understanding as essential tools in conflict resolution.

To facilitate hands-on learning, parents were randomly split into small, diverse groups through the online platform's breakout room feature. Each group was assigned one of the students' narratives to work on, and their task was to apply the conflict resolution theories and strategies introduced earlier to analyze and propose solutions for the case at hand.

The groups were instructed to take a structured approach to their analysis. First, they identified the conflict dynamics by dissecting the conflict presented in their assigned story, examining triggers, misunderstandings, and key communication breakdowns from both the parent's and the teen's perspectives. This analysis helped them to pinpoint the underlying causes of tension. Next, the groups moved on to applying theoretical concepts by incorporating the strategies introduced in the theoretical portion of the seminar. Parents discussed possible approaches to addressing the conflict, suggesting tactics such as rephrasing communication to reduce defensiveness, expressing empathy to foster understanding, and setting boundaries with mutual respect. Finally, each group proposed a resolution strategy by crafting a specific, practical plan that the fictional parent could adopt to de-escalate or resolve the conflict. This plan included actionable components like specific phrases to encourage open

dialogue, approaches for validating the teenager's feelings, and techniques to re-establish trust and mutual respect between parent and teen.

To encourage collaboration and equal participation, each group was guided to appoint a facilitator who would ensure everyone contributed and that the group remained focused on the task.

After a designated period of group work, the participants reconvened in the main virtual room. Each group was then invited to present their analysis and resolution strategies. One by one, the groups shared their reflections on the conflict, their insights into the teenager's perspective, and the practical strategies they believed would foster constructive outcomes.

The presentation phase offered two key benefits for the participating parents. First, it provided diverse perspectives; by hearing the analyses and interpretations from other groups, parents were exposed to a variety of approaches and insights, broadening their understanding of conflict resolution possibilities. This exchange allowed them to see how others approached similar challenges, often providing fresh angles they might not have considered on their own. Second, the presentations facilitated collective learning; the group discussions sparked a dynamic and open conversation where parents could ask questions, propose alternative viewpoints, and gain new perspectives by learning from each other's experiences. This collaborative exchange fostered a supportive learning environment, allowing parents to deepen their insights and refine their conflict resolution strategies.

Following the presentations, the seminar shifted into an open discussion format, where parents could freely express their thoughts, ask questions, and reflect on the experience. This segment was designed to deepen parents' understanding by inviting them to relate what they had learned back to their personal lives and share any anticipated challenges in applying these strategies.

During this conversation, several parents voiced newfound realizations about their children's perspectives, acknowledging that they had rarely considered conflicts from their teens' points of view before this seminar. Others expressed appreciation for the structured approach to conflict resolution, noting how the process of discussing each step with peers had helped them clarify strategies that would be applicable in their own families.

Parents also candidly discussed the emotional challenges of putting theory into practice, particularly in the face of intense feelings or when they felt that they were constantly "walking on eggshells" around their teens. In response, I provided additional tips for remaining calm and focused during conflicts, as well as advice for balancing empathy with clear boundaries—a skill that many parents identified as a priority.

To close the seminar, I asked each parent to briefly share one key takeaway or commitment they planned to implement in their interactions with their teens. Many expressed intentions to listen more actively, pause before reacting defensively, or make a conscious effort to validate their children's feelings. This collective commitment was an encouraging note to end on, fostering a sense of solidarity and support among participants.

Research Design and Methodological Rigor
Research approach and design

This study employed a qualitative research design rooted in narrative pedagogy and thematic analysis to investigate the use of student narratives in enhancing parental involvement and conflict resolution with adolescents. Qualitative methodology was selected for its strength in exploring complex human experiences, particularly parental reflections and meaning-making processes elicited through interaction with authentic adolescent stories (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Riessman, 2008). The narrative approach facilitated a deep connection between theoretical concepts of conflict resolution and real-life application as experienced by participating parents (Riessman, 2008).

Participants and setting

Participants were parents enrolled in a local Parents' School seminar conducted online, aimed at improving conflict resolution skills through engagement with anonymized student narratives describing parent-teen conflicts. The participant group consisted of [number] parents representing a range of socio-demographic backgrounds within the local community. Recruitment was conducted through school outreach, ensuring voluntary participation by parents actively engaged in their child's education. Demographic details such as age range, gender distribution, and prior experience with parental education programs were collected to contextualize the findings (Patton, 2015).

Data collection procedures

Data were gathered during the seminar through multiple qualitative sources. These included audio recordings and transcripts of group discussions, parental reflections shared during and after breakout group activities, and written feedback submitted by participants. The seminar structure involved initial theoretical presentations on conflict resolution models, followed by interactive activities where parents applied these theories to selected anonymized student narratives. This interactive format was designed to prompt authentic reflections and collaborative problem-solving (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Data analysis approach

Thematic analysis was employed to systematically examine parents' reflections and discussions, following a rigorous coding process. Initial open coding identified significant phrases and concepts related to empathy, communication, boundary-setting, collaboration, and emotional regulation. These codes were subsequently clustered into broader themes reflective of the collective parental experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To enhance coding reliability, multiple readings of transcripts were conducted, along with peer debriefing sessions to refine theme definitions and interpretation consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations and Safeguards

Ethical integrity was prioritized throughout the study. Student narratives used in the seminar were fully anonymized to protect confidentiality and privacy. Prior informed consent was obtained from all parent participants, who were informed about the study's aims, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data confidentiality was maintained through secure digital storage and anonymized reporting. The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines for educational research (Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2004).

Validity and Trustworthiness

Strategies to enhance validity included triangulation of data sources (group discussions, written reflections, facilitator observations) and member checking during the seminar, allowing participants to clarify and confirm interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Reflexivity was exercised by the researcher to acknowledge potential biases and maintain objectivity, with detailed documentation of analytic decisions and methodology transparency (Tracy, 2010). While the sample size and setting limit broad generalizability, the depth and richness of qualitative data provide meaningful insights into the processes and impact of narrative pedagogy in parental education (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Empirical results – Thematic analysis of parental reflections

The seminar provided a rich array of data drawn from the parents' reflections and group discussions on conflict resolution with their teenagers. Using thematic analysis, I identified recurring patterns and organized parents' responses into a series of themes that captured the key elements of their experiences, insights, and challenges. This method involved transcribing

the parents' comments, coding them to highlight significant phrases, and clustering these codes to form meaningful categories. The emergent themes were derived from both the frequency and intensity of specific ideas expressed by parents, illuminating both shared and unique aspects of their reflections.

Theme 1: Empathy as a transformative tool

One of the most prominent themes to emerge was the newfound importance of empathy in parental approaches to conflict. Many parents expressed a shift in perspective after reading the students' narratives and reflected on how they could better understand their teenagers' emotions and viewpoints.

For instance, one parent stated, "Reading their [the teens'] stories made me realize that I sometimes forget they're going through their own battles. I need to remember that they have their own pressures." This and similar comments were categorized under Recognizing Teenagers' Inner Struggles, later forming the broader theme Empathy as a Transformative Tool. The codes contributing to this theme included phrases like "putting myself in their shoes," "seeing things from their side," and "acknowledging their feelings before reacting."

Another parent reflected, "I think I've been so focused on enforcing rules that I lost sight of trying to understand what my child is really going through." This acknowledgment of an empathy gap—an insight shared by several participants—revealed the crucial role empathy plays in de-escalating conflicts and building trust. The empathy theme highlighted how parents began to recognize empathy not just as an abstract concept but as a practical tool to bridge communication gaps and reduce misunderstandings.

Theme 2: Balancing boundaries and flexibility

Another significant theme was the challenge of balancing firm boundaries with flexibility, especially in conflicts centered around autonomy and trust. Parents repeatedly raised concerns about the struggle to maintain authority while allowing their teens space to grow and make independent choices. This tension was captured in responses such as, "It's hard to find that line between giving them freedom and making sure they don't make mistakes that could hurt them," and "I want to give them room to make decisions, but I also worry they're not ready."

Coding produced categories like Fear of Losing Control and Desire for Teen Independence, which synthesized into Balancing Boundaries and Flexibility. These were later synthesized into the broader theme of Balancing Boundaries and Flexibility. Parents expressed a need to adjust their approach from rigid rule enforcement to a more collaborative and trust-based relationship.

One parent explained, "I realized that when I come down too hard, it just pushes my daughter further away. Maybe I need to find ways to be clear about boundaries without making her feel suffocated." Comments like these emphasized a common desire to find a balance, and the theme illustrated how parents were exploring ways to establish clear expectations while respecting their teens' growing autonomy.

Theme 3: Communication as a skill to be developed

Communication challenges were another recurrent topic in parents' reflections, especially regarding their own communication style and the impact it had on conflicts. Many parents acknowledged that their tone and choice of words often escalated situations, rather than resolved them. As one parent observed, "I see now that sometimes I get defensive without even realizing it. When I react right away, my son shuts down, and we're back at square one."

Initial codes included Recognizing Defensive Communication, Reactivity, and Impact of Tone, forming the theme Communication as a Skill to Be Developed. These categories formed the basis for the theme of Communication as a Skill to Be Developed. This theme encapsulated the collective awareness that communication with teenagers requires conscious effort,

patience, and adaptability. Several parents mentioned a new commitment to "pause and listen," a skill they hoped to build over time.

Another parent reflected on the role of active listening, saying, "I'm starting to understand that it's not just about what I want to say—it's about how they're hearing it." This theme illustrated a shift among parents toward more intentional communication practices, with many expressing a desire to become better listeners and less reactive responders.

Theme 4: Shifting from control to collaboration

A fourth theme was Shifting from Control to Collaboration. Parents reflected on moving away from authoritarian approaches toward collaborative problem-solving with their teenagers. Through the process of applying conflict resolution theories in the group exercise, parents came to recognize the potential benefits of involving their teenagers in decision-making and resolving issues together.

One parent remarked, "I've always thought I had to have all the answers, but maybe it's okay to let my son have a say in how we solve our issues." Another shared, "I'm realizing that if we work together on setting boundaries, he might actually respect them more." These remarks resulted in categories such as Recognizing Teen Agency and Co-Creating Solutions, which merged into the theme of collaboration over control.

This shift from controlling behavior to collaborative approaches signified a profound realization for many parents, who expressed a willingness to involve their children more actively in discussions around rules and responsibilities. This theme underscored the role of mutual respect and partnership in building more constructive and enduring resolutions to conflicts.

Theme 5: Emotional self-regulation and Its challenges

The final theme, Emotional Self-Regulation and Its Challenges, highlighted parents' difficulties in managing emotions during conflicts. Many parents acknowledged that their emotional responses often exacerbated conflicts, turning simple disagreements into heated arguments. Statements such as "I need to learn to stay calm, even when my son is pushing all my buttons" and "I get so frustrated that sometimes I lose control, and I know it doesn't help" were coded into categories like Managing Anger and Recognizing Emotional Triggers.

This theme emerged as parents repeatedly discussed the difficulty of maintaining composure and the impact of their own stress levels on conflict escalation. One parent poignantly noted, "I want to be a role model for my daughter, but it's so hard to stay calm in the moment." The theme of emotional self-regulation thus captured the realization that effective conflict resolution requires not only patience with their children but also a significant degree of self-awareness and emotional control.

Discussion

The five themes that were presented in the previous chapter offer a comprehensive picture of the insights and shifts parents experienced during the seminar. Each one of them highlights a specific aspect of conflict resolution that parents identified as pivotal, as well as the personal growth and challenges they encountered in applying these concepts to their relationships with their teenagers.

The use of students' narratives as a focal point in the seminar was instrumental in bringing these themes to light, as it allowed parents to see the conflicts from their children's perspective. In doing so, the thematic analysis revealed not only parents' aspirations to improve their conflict resolution skills but also the emotional and practical obstacles they encountered in this journey. This analysis underscores the potential of students' stories as powerful tools in promoting self-reflection, empathy, and constructive conflict resolution strategies among parents.

The findings of this study highlight the potential of student narratives as a tool for fostering improved parent-teen relationships, especially in the context of conflict resolution. By immersing parents in the real-life experiences of adolescents, this method facilitates deeper empathy and promotes a more nuanced understanding of the emotional and cognitive challenges their children face. This section discusses the implications of these results for parent-teen relationships, analyzes how the use of narratives can enhance parental empathy and conflict resolution skills, and considers the broader impacts of narrative-based interventions in parental education.

The seminar described in this study underscores the importance of parental involvement during adolescence and suggests that narrative-based approaches can significantly enhance the quality of parent-teen interactions. By providing parents with direct access to the perspectives of their children through stories of conflict, the seminar enabled parents to move beyond their assumptions and focus on their children's emotional realities. This shift in perspective is crucial in improving communication and reducing the frequency of misunderstandings between parents and teens, which are often at the core of family conflicts (Smetana, 2011).

Parents who participated in the seminar reported a greater awareness of the emotional triggers that lead to conflicts with their adolescents. By recognizing their own roles in conflict dynamics, parents could approach their children with more patience and understanding. This reflective process aligns with research that suggests parental self-awareness is key to developing effective conflict resolution strategies (Laursen & Collins, 2009). As parents become more attuned to their children's experiences and emotions, they are better able to respond empathetically, leading to healthier relationships characterized by trust, mutual respect, and open communication.

Furthermore, by applying conflict resolution theory to real-life situations, parents were able to practice new communication strategies in a supportive, structured environment. This hands-on experience helped parents not only understand the theoretical frameworks but also gave them the confidence to implement these strategies at home. Over time, such interventions can lead to long-term improvements in parent-teen relationships, reducing the intensity and frequency of conflicts while fostering emotional closeness.

A key outcome of the seminar was the development of parental empathy, which plays a vital role in conflict resolution. Empathy enables parents to understand and share the feelings of their adolescents, which can de-escalate conflicts and improve problem-solving. The use of student narratives was particularly effective in this regard. By reading and discussing their children's anonymous stories, parents were able to see conflicts from their adolescents' perspectives, which helped them empathize with the emotional and psychological complexities involved. This form of perspective-taking is critical in improving parent-child interactions, as it shifts the focus from control and authority to understanding and support (Davis, 1983; Galinsky, 2002).

The process of developing empathy also had a transformative effect on parents' conflict resolution skills. Empathy is closely linked to emotional intelligence, which enables individuals to manage their own emotions and respond effectively to the emotions of others (Gottman, 1997). When parents understand the underlying emotions driving their children's behaviors, they can approach conflicts with greater emotional regulation and sensitivity. This shift from reactive to reflective conflict resolution can reduce tension and promote constructive dialogue between parents and teens.

Moreover, the seminar reinforced the importance of collaborative problem-solving. By learning to listen actively and validate their children's feelings, parents could model the behaviors they wish to see in their adolescents. This cooperative approach not only strengthens the parent-child relationship but also teaches adolescents valuable life skills in

communication and emotional regulation, setting the foundation for healthier interpersonal relationships throughout their lives.

Beyond the immediate effects on individual parent-teen relationships, narrative-based interventions hold broader implications for parental education and school-family collaboration. The use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in parental education taps into the human brain's natural affinity for narratives, which enhance learning by making abstract concepts more relatable and easier to understand (Bruner, 1991; Green & Brock, 2000). This narrative-driven approach not only helps parents connect emotionally with their children's experiences but also deepens their engagement in the educational process itself.

The potential applications of narrative-based interventions extend beyond conflict resolution. Schools can utilize student narratives to address a range of issues, from academic stress to peer relationships and mental health challenges. By integrating these personal stories into workshops or other parental education initiatives, educators can foster a culture of empathy and open communication between parents, students, and schools. This holistic approach could lead to a more supportive and collaborative learning environment, with parents taking a more active role in addressing the emotional and social needs of their children (Epstein, 2011).

Additionally, narrative-based interventions can serve as a valuable tool for parents from diverse cultural backgrounds. Adolescents from different cultural contexts often face unique challenges, and the use of narratives can help parents navigate these complexities by offering culturally relevant examples of conflict and resolution. This method can promote inclusivity in parental education, ensuring that all families feel seen and understood in the educational process (Fan & Chen, 2001).

While the results of this study are promising, there are several limitations to consider. The seminar was conducted with a relatively small and homogeneous group of parents, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research should expand this approach to more diverse populations, exploring how narrative-based interventions work across different cultural, socio-economic, and family structures. Additionally, long-term studies are needed to assess whether the improvements in empathy and conflict resolution skills observed in the seminar translate into sustained behavioral changes at home.

Another area for further research is the role of adolescents in this process. While this study focused primarily on parental education, incorporating adolescents into these workshops—allowing them to share their narratives and engage in joint problem-solving with their parents—could further enhance the intervention's effectiveness. Exploring this collaborative approach could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of family conflict and contribute to even more effective parental involvement strategies.

Conclusion

The teenage years present a unique set of challenges for both parents and adolescents, marked by increased autonomy, identity exploration, and often, heightened conflict. Navigating these conflicts effectively requires parents not only to understand adolescent development but also to empathize with their children's perspectives. This study has explored how student narratives can serve as a valuable tool in parental education, particularly in enhancing conflict resolution strategies. By engaging with real-life stories of adolescent experiences, parents gain insights into the emotional and cognitive processes of their children, allowing them to reflect on their own parenting approaches and apply conflict resolution techniques more effectively.

The use of narrative pedagogy, as demonstrated in the seminar described in this study, bridges the gap between theory and practice. When parents are presented with authentic narratives of their children's experiences, they are better able to internalize theoretical concepts and translate them into action. This method fosters empathy, critical thinking, and

problem-solving, equipping parents with the tools to handle conflicts constructively and maintain supportive relationships with their adolescents.

Moreover, this approach aligns with contemporary research on parental involvement and adolescent development. As the study shows, student narratives offer a powerful means of enhancing parental engagement by making the challenges of adolescence more tangible and relatable. By integrating narrative-based strategies into parental education programs, schools and educators can play a crucial role in strengthening parent-child relationships, particularly during the tumultuous adolescent years.

Looking ahead, future research should continue to explore the potential of narrative pedagogy in various educational settings, with particular attention to its long-term effects on family dynamics and adolescent well-being. Further studies could also examine how cultural and socio-economic factors influence the effectiveness of narrative-based approaches in parental education.

In conclusion, the use of student stories in parental education represents a promising strategy for enhancing parental involvement and improving conflict resolution within families. By fostering empathy and providing practical applications for conflict management theory, this approach helps parents better understand their adolescents and navigate the complexities of the parent-teen relationship. As schools continue to seek innovative ways to engage parents, incorporating narrative pedagogy offers a meaningful way to support both parents and adolescents during this critical stage of development.

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