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Teaching Early Literacy To Low-Income Mothers

Cecilia Regalado

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Fall 2020

Teaching Early Literacy To Low-income Mothers

Introduction

Many mothers categorized as low-income families don't know how to help their children to build language and early literacy skills. One of the main reasons why they are struggling a lot is because of the lack of knowledge and resources within their grasp group. Thus, the Women's, Infant's, and Children's is a federal assistance program that will help many of them to provide early literacy techniques, food coupons, and healthy eating habits to pregnant women and children under 5 years old. For example, by teaching children how to talk or just making simple conversations at an early age will help them succeed in any other literacy phase. But what happens when this is not being taught to children? They may face other issues related to communication like speech and language delays that will affect their ability to communicate with others as they grow. For that particular reason, I was planning to conduct a small literacy training group for three days at the WIC office in Salinas, California. The recipients of the training group would be a small group of low-income mothers receiving benefits from the Wic program between the ages of 18 to 35 years old who come from different cultural backgrounds, especially from the Latino community. I will be providing 3 different lessons over the three days that will inform the participants on how to teach better language, reading, and writing skills for their children.

Needs Statement

Language development is one of the most important milestones during childhood because it has strong implications with the later achievement of the child's life. Language learning is a natural life stage that all people are born with or have the ability to learn it through the first years

of life. Many researchers state that during the first three years of the child's life, their brains develop too fast and that's when they tend to gain language and literacy skills the most (Del Tufo, Sayako Earle & Cutting, 2019). Since children are able to understand and process their own language skills.

On the other hand, children need literacy skills in order to understand and communicate in everyday life. Literacy consists of three major components such as reading, writing and speaking. These components are essential because they prepare children for exploring new things, getting ready for school, and interacting with other children. If parents do not teach their kids literacy skills at an early age, it is likely that the child will struggle in school with their academics and may fall behind among his/her peers. According to Noella Mackenzie & Brian Hemmings, "Language and literacy skills are instrumental to success at school and early success with writing is a key factor in literacy development". The author believes that including such skills will make it easy for them to learn to read or write before attending school.

Early literacy also refers to what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write. In many of the occasions children are able to understand and process their own language skills. Just by making simple conversations will help them to succeed in any other phase of their development. For example, mothers can help their children too by providing them with activities about early literacy that the child will enjoy doing like reading an interesting book together or watching an interesting video. Research shows that when children are engaged in literacy activities they gain important reading skills (Baroody & Diamond, 2014).

Given that children have to use early literacy skills since the beginning of their life, it is very likely that they are not aware of how early literacy might affect or benefit them, or their

well being. For this particular reason and in order to increase their knowledge, I intend to provide a 3-day lesson about how to introduce early literacy skills for low-income mothers at the Salinas Wic Office.

Theory

The theory that I would choose to go with my project would be Albert Bandura, an American psychologist and the main creator of the social cognitive theory. He believes that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modeling. He has shown the people can be strongly influenced by other people's behavior but it is also clear that how they learn changes while they mature. For example, as people grow up something else happens, they tend to develop the capacity to reflect on what they see and identify with other people. So, this is now called empathy which is the ability to understand and place oneself in another's position. According to the Bobo doll experiment, "Children are able to learn social behavior such as aggression through the process of observational learning, through watching the behavior of another person".

This theory would have worked with my approach to this project because it focuses on how mothers and other people can learn from watching/observing others perform tasks. Observation plays a very powerful part in the people's learning ability because it would not only teach the mothers behaviors but also helps them to understand and apply their learning to their lives. While imitation is more obvious and usually takes places from the individuals perspective through how it can bring changes to their behaviors. According to Bandura, "Imitation is more likely to happen if the model holds an admired status and the activity that they do are of great value. The imitated behavior is gradually reinforced and the individual identifies with the model

and gradually tries out the behavior”. In other words, after my project concluded participants would be able to imitate or apply what they learned to their lives.

Consideration of diversity

My project will be conducted at the Salinas, California WIC office as I mentioned above. The participants of my project will be only women, due that this program is mainly considered to serve low-income pregnant women between 18 and 35 years old. In addition, considering that most of the WIC clientele comes from the Latino community, most of them will only speak Spanish and a few of them just English. My project will be conducted fully in Spanish due to the majority of my participants being Latinos and speaking mostly Spanish. A few clients may speak Triqui, an indigenous language from Oaxaca, Mexico, or only speak English and will be excluded from participating. In addition, the statewide California's WIC caseload reflects the state's diversity. The majority of participants (75%) are Latino/a, followed by Caucasian (12%), African-American (6.5%), Asian (6%), and Native American (0.5%). However, because the office is located in Salinas, I anticipate that all the participants are likely to be Latino, reflecting the surrounding community.

Although my project is only focused on low-income mothers it can be more inclusive by focusing on people that come from different socioeconomic status who could also benefit from the content.

Learning Outcomes

I was going to provide three, 25-minute lessons/classes to low-income mothers at the WIC office in Salinas Ca.

By the end of the project, participants would have been able to:

1. Indicate one early literacy technique.
2. Indicate one way how early literacy helps children to succeed.
3. Enhance language learning that doesn't require parenting literacy.

Method

Day 1

During the first day, I would have introduced myself to the small group of mothers and informed them why I was there. Then, I would have told them that I was going to show them a powerpoint presentation about early literacy skills and their benefits. See Appendix A. After the powerpoint presentation ended, I would also show to the mothers a short video called ¿Qué es la alfabetización temprana y porque es importante? (<https://faast.org/services/device-loans/>)

Summing up to what we would have learned that day about literacy earlier that day.

Day 2

During my second day, I was planning to read a book with my participants. So, the name of the book that I would have used was “Cómo jugar y estimular a tu bebe: Actividades para desarrollar la inteligencia de nuestros hijos.” Which is a book of different ideas about learning literacy skills and also different ideas on how to introduce it to the child in an easy and simple way. Then, I would write my own definition about early literacy skills and give them the opportunity to share their opinions and write it down on a whiteboard.

See Appendix B.

Day 3

During the last day of my project I would share a scenario to the mothers about what they would do if their child struggles in any literacy stage at some point of their life. And what

they would do different now that they may be able to identify some literary techniques after everything we have covered. At the end they would also have the opportunity to share their opinion about this activity and also what they would do different to improve it. Participants would have done this orally which means that not other materials would have been required. See appendix C.

Results

Not completed due to Covid-19.

Discussion

Not complete due to Covid-19.

References

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- Public Policy Institute of California: WIC and Poverty Overviews
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<https://www.simplypsychology.org/bobo-doll.html>

Appendix A

Powerpoint presentation on early literacy skills



La Alfabetización:

- La alfabetización temprana se refiere a lo que un niño sabe sobre lectura o escritura mucho antes de que ellos puedan ser capaces de leer o escribir.
- Es un proceso permanente para la adquisición del lenguaje para la producción y la comprensión de textos orales y escritos lingüísticos.
- Es el proceso continuo de entender y utilizar el lenguaje correctamente que comienza al nacer y continúa hasta la infancia (0 a 7 años de edad aprox).
- La alfabetización también es uno de los derechos humanos del niño y del adulto que les ayudará a transformar sus vidas para siempre.

Que es Alfabetizar?

- Alfabetizar es acercar a quien lo necesite las herramientas necesarias para la lectura y escritura.
- Alfabetizar es crear conciencia de la importancia que significa leer y escribir.
- Alfabetizar es sensibilizarse por la necesidad del que más lo necesita.
- Alfabetizar es aportar un granito de arena al engrandecimiento de alguien.
- Alfabetizar es mejorar la calidad de vida de las personas que lo necesitan.

Beneficios de la Educación Temprana

Los expertos en educación temprana afirman que las bases para el desarrollo de la alfabetización empiezan a desarrollarse desde el nacimiento.

La alfabetización temprana no significa enseñar a leer a los bebés o niños pequeños a leer antes de que estén listos, porque en vez de ayudarles les puede causar frustración y sentimientos negativos.

La alfabetización temprana no solo implica libros, tan solo con pequeñas acciones e interacciones sensibles y de calidad con los padres, los cuidadores o la familia a su alrededor pueden ayudarles a sentar bases fuertes para la lectura y escritura.

Cómo introducir la Alfabetización a los niños de una manera fácil y rápida:

Los padres son el primer maestro para sus hijos, ellos los conocen mucho mejor y también los niños aprenden mejor haciendo cosas juntos.

Preparar un ambiente relajado y tranquilo ayudará al niño a utilizar todos sus sentidos y les ayudará a tener una mejor concentración.

Para aprender a escribir no solo es practicar la escritura sino también actividades como dibujar, pintar, y colorear. Mientras que para leer primero tendrán que aprender a formar palabras silaba por silaba para ir ganando agilidad y velocidad.

Gracias!

Preguntas?

Continuation of Appendix A

<https://faast.org/services/device-loans/>

PD: Just click on it and you will be able to find the YouTube source.

Appendix B

Book that I was planning to use with my participants on day 2.



Appendix C

Results would have been shared orally.

Appendix D

Presentation from Capstone Festival



**TEACHING EARLY LITERACY TO LOW-
INCOME MOTHERS**

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Introduction

Early literacy gives children the foundation they need to learn and grow.

It consists of three major components such as reading, writing and speaking.

If parents do not teach early literacy skills, it is likely that the child will struggle on school and may fall behind among his/hers peers.

Needs Statement

- The lack of early literacy may fall children behind among their peers.
- Children will struggle in school due to the lack of resources.
- Low-income mothers may not know all the strategies to improve their child literacy.

Theory/Development

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory:

Children learn from observation, imitation, and modeling.

Four main components of the social learning theory include:

Paying attention

Retain information

Demonstrate behavior

Motivation for behavior

Methods

Summary of activities:

- I. A powerpoint presentation and a video on benefits of early literacy.
- II. Participants would define early literacy in their own words and write down their responses.
- III. My participants would also have a scenario about: What they would do if their children may struggle in any literacy area at some point of their life?

Continuation of Methods

First day-

I was planning to showed my participants a powerpoint presentation about literacy skills and their benefits.

Then I would asked them to write down 3 main points they learned from the powerpoint.

After I would also showed them a video to review what they have learned so far.

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Continuation of Methods 2

Second day-

I was going to ask the group of mothers to define in their own words what it meant to them early literacy and at least one easy way to introduce it to their child.

Then I would have reviewed the responses and had them to write it down in a white board.

At the end I would asked them why is this an important technique to teached to their children.

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Continuation of Methods 3

Third day:

On the last day I was planning to give a scenario to the mothers about what they would do if their child struggles in any literacy stage at some point of their life.

I would asked them what they would do different now that they are able to identify some literary techniques than before .

At the end they would also have the opportunity to shared their opinion about this activity and what they would do different to improve it.

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Learning Outcomes

At the end of my project participants would have been able to...

- Indicate one early literacy technique.
- Indicate one way how early literacy helps children to succeed.
- Enhance language learning that doesn't require parenting literacy.

Results

- Not completed due to covid-19.

Discussion

- Not completed due to covid-19.



Thank you!

Any questions?