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The *Language Experience Forum* Journal is a refereed journal of the Language Experience Special Interest Group of the International Literacy Association. The journal is aimed at teachers of literacy at all levels. It provides a forum for discussion of ideas and issues related to the teaching of literacy to all groups of students and across multiple disciplinary areas.

Submit articles to the editor: faziom@nsula.edu

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Exposure, Experience, & Empathy: Rural Education, Preservice Teachers, & English Language Learner Support

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Abstract

Teachers qualified to work with English Language Learners (ELLs) and ELLs with Learning Disabilities (LD) in rural settings are a present and growing need. However, for many preservice teachers there is an experience gap existing between theory and practice regarding differentiation and empathy. In order to provide an experience to bridge this gap, two university professors developed a project aimed at providing preservice teachers with a common experience requiring extensive language and literacy supports. The intention was to foster an empathetic perspective from project participants for ELLs and ELLS with LD by placing them in a situation that resembles what students might experience. The results of the project provided a model for research-based, engaging strategies which allowed preservice teachers to experience why and how differentiation is important from a student perspective.

Introduction

Educational conversations in an extremely large and diverse nation often exclude rural public school settings and instead focus on areas and issues related to large student populations. This pattern implies that diversity and urban education go hand in hand and that rural education is homogeneous in culture, language, and ability (Barrio, 2017).

However, the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Rural Education in America Report (2011-2012) stated that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in rural public school made up 14.1% of the school population, while students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) made up 26.7%. This comes out to 640,000 rural students identified as LEP and 1,539,000 students with IEPs. Furthermore, the U.S Department of Education (2018) reported that as of 2015, 9.5% of all U.S. public school students were identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). Additionally,14.7% of those identified as ELLs were also identified as receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). While these numbers may seem small, they represent 4,800,000 and 713,000 ELL students respectively. Nonetheless, this relatively small yet substantial number of ELLs with Learning Disabilities (LD) may be misleading. Without appropriate training in the characteristics and behaviors of both ELLs and ELLs with LD, educators can easily mistake the stages of second language acquisition for language and literacy LD (Klingner & Eppollito, 2014; Tyler & Garcia, 2013). In a recent article discussing ELLs identified as qualifying for Special Education services in rural communities, it is purported that "although the federal government, as well as researchers, policy makers, practitioners, parents, and professional organizations have attempted to remediate the problem of disproportionality, the issue continues to be a major topic in our schools" (Barrio, 2017, p. 65). Because this issue is systemic, teacher preparation programs both inside and outside the field of Special Education must provide preservice teachers with research-based methods, strategies, and experiences focused on differentiated instruction for ELLs. Proper identification of ELLs with LD requires additional educator training in the

areas of second language acquisition processes, learning disability characteristics, ELL intervention practices, and educational opportunities.

Differentiated Instruction and Teacher Preparation

Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy dedicated to the idea that students learn at different rates and in different ways (Heacox & Cash, 2014; Kronberg, 2013; Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007; Tyler & Garcia, 2013). This philosophy encourages teachers to consider obstacles to student success in a variety of ways, which may include linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and/or disability concerns. Its "...purpose is to help all students reach the same goal but to do so in a way that works for each student" (Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010, p. 84). Yet, in order for differentiated instruction to be successful, teachers must consider individual student needs and carefully plan a variety of ways to teach, assess, and support learning (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin 2014; Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). Furthermore, it is imperative that preservice teachers develop empathy toward students across the language learning spectrum, as background knowledge and personal belief systems may color perceptions and attitudes toward students with language differences and/or disabilities (Linek, Haas, & Glaeser, 2011). Teacher preparation programs are key to developing preservice teachers ready to take on the challenges of working among students with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Blanton, Pugach, & Florian, 2011, April). However, while programs often discuss the issues and concerns associated with urban education, they must also consider the unique qualities of teaching in a rural setting and prepare preservice teachers for the challenges of working through geographic isolation as well as limited resources and professional development access (Barrio, 2017).

Traditional teacher preparation programs strive to provide preservice teachers with quality experiences including clinically-based coursework, mentored practice, and field experiences (Linek, Sampson, Haas, Nylan, Moore, & Sadler, 2012). Such opportunities are designed to scaffold understanding around planning, management, and instruction for diverse learning needs and are vital to a thorough comprehension of the importance of differentiated instruction (Dixon, et al., 2014). While this type of exposure is crucial, it is often provided at the end of the preparation cycle. Program developers and instructors must provide additional exposures throughout the cycle that model differentiated instruction within undergraduate classrooms, which would afford preservice teachers opportunities to learn by seeing, hearing, doing, and experiencing earlier in the cycle. Earlier and more frequent experiences with differentiation would increase the probability of mastering these skills before their student teaching internship. The level of skill and knowledge preservice teachers need to develop differentiated lessons for all students requires experiential opportunities that model quality instruction outside of, and in addition to, traditional student teaching internships.

Currently, there is no single assessment method or tool available that can distinguish between ELLs struggling with language acquisition and ELLs with LD; rather, there are essential questions and processes that can help with the identification process (Burr, Haas, & Ferriere, 2015). Research suggests that one aspect of identification is the review of ELL opportunities with high quality, differentiated instruction. These opportunities must support ELLs in ways that allow for acceptable levels of academic progress. Pedagogical differentiation, then, becomes a crucial first step in supporting ELLs and ELLs with LD. Furthermore, preservice teachers' continued exposure to ELLs

and ELL supports can encourage empathy development and provide a foundation for culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.

Project Development

Preservice teachers often struggle to grasp fully the philosophy and implementation practices of differentiation in terms of language, culture, socioeconomic status, and/or disability. Furthermore, as changing demographics affects all areas of society, future teachers will most likely teach in schools with increasingly diverse populations in both urban and rural settings. Vespa, Armstrong, and Medina (2018) of The U.S. Census Bureau indicate that by 2060 several diverse populations will double across the country. Kandel and Cromartie (2004) explain that many immigrants are settling in more rural settings, and Sharp and Lee (2017) indicate that 90% of rural areas are more diverse than 20 years ago.

Best practices regarding ELLs and ELLs with LD are relevant in both urban and rural settings. However, teaching practices and teacher preparation programs that have traditionally required considerations of diversity have mainly centered on urban educators. Current changes in rural demographics may require rural educators and teacher preparation programs to develop innovative teaching approaches to provide opportunities for experiences and interactions with diverse populations that are key to encouraging (preservice) teachers to develop empathic connections with their students. Such experiences are also fundamental to help preservice teachers recognize how and why differentiation for ELLs and ELLs with LD is an ethical, moral, social, and legal imperative. With changing demographics, preservice teachers must expect and prepare for greater diversity in their classroom, yet it is often difficult to know how to engage diversity in a way

that can build relationships and empathy while teaching. This was evident for one literacy education professor at a rural, liberal arts university in the Midwest while teaching undergraduate students about the importance of differentiation. All preservice participants were upperclassman majoring in K-12 Special Education or Elementary Education with a Specialization in Reading. Additionally, this particular group of preservice teachers involved with the empathy project predominately originated from small, rural, homogenous communities where peers largely shared contexts, cultures, and abilities. While preservice teachers could grasp concepts and strategies behind differentiating to a diverse range of abilities among their students, they struggled to grasp why it was necessary to reach those along the broad spectrum of abilities. Consequently, it was noted that they failed to plan effectively for students with different backgrounds or abilities.

Within the context of two undergraduate literacy methods courses, preservice teachers were asked to develop lesson plans for the K-12 setting that differentiated for specific subpopulations of students, including ELLs with LD. During class, preservice teachers were able to discuss the importance and purposes of differentiation; however, when planning, they produced lessons that directly opposed classroom dialog. Their lesson plans illustrated a limited vision of diversity, and they struggled to plan effective ways to connect with and understand empathically from the perspective of their own students. Lesson plans for differentiation focused on broad, sweeping phrases or statements such as “Visual Supports,” “I will print off a picture and give one to each ELL,” “I will project the article on the board, so they can read it.” It was clear that they needed to understand from the perspective of their students in order to prepare an effective way to differentiate difficult concepts instead of words. Differentiation seemed to be an add-on,

something that was attached to a fully-developed general education lesson plan rather than a purposeful consideration throughout the planning process. Furthermore, their lack of exposure to people and situations outside the parameters of the dominant language, culture, and/or abilities revealed a lack of empathy for and understanding of students' needs and struggles.

As it became apparent that the current model for teaching this group of preservice teachers was not providing the needed level of understanding and empathy, the instructor reached out to a colleague for support who works in the field of Spanish language. Through collaborative conversations connected to empathy and language acquisition, parallel pedagogies related to differentiation were discovered. Foreign language instruction incorporates similar strategies and methods as English as a Second Language (ESL) and Special Education (SPED) instruction, which made collaborating on this project a logical connection. This project sought to provide preservice teachers with a common, albeit potentially uncomfortable experience that would highlight how differentiation strategies (Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010; Heacox, 2009; Heacox & Cash, 2014; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006) support instruction, curriculum, and assessment for all learners.

Exposure

The collaboration began with the idea of immersing preservice teachers into an experience in which they would face similar limitations to the students they would eventually be teaching. While this shared experience was outside the traditional guidelines of Language Experience Approach, it was designed to provide a shared experience with the potential to provide metacognitive change and development for best supporting ELLs and ELLs with LD. The Spanish professor was invited to join the class

as a guest speaker and teach a lesson addressing a common task (in this case, making a *torta* which is a type of sandwich). While this task does not necessarily reflect all the abstract topics that ELL and LD students will face in the classroom, the mechanical task was sufficient to help the preservice teachers meet the objective of the exercise: experience class as a language learner, develop empathy and understanding around the role and impact of differentiation strategies, and later consider how to employ strategies in their own planning. Preparation for this common task consisted of face-to-face and virtual communications between the two faculty involved over the course of four weeks. Additional planning encompassed compiling material lists for the task and presentation as well as acquiring materials. The actual experience took place during one 50 minute lesson and was provided to two separate classes. With each class, there was a brief introduction in English. However, the presentation of material, in lecture format, was completely in Spanish and included questions directed to the class as well as to specific individuals as a teacher normally would do. The Spanish professor taught as if he expected complete understanding, intentionally demonstrating through posture, gestures, and expressions that he expected them to answer the basic questions he asked.

In this project, preservice teachers were placed in a situation where they were unable to comprehend the concept, not because of a lack of intelligence, but because they did not have the tools: knowledge of the Spanish language. The objective was to put them on edge and require them to face a topic they felt they should know in spite of not having any real ability to comprehend. He continued for a time, letting his questions hang in the silence of expectation until the situation became slightly uncomfortable, and then he moved on. This part of the lesson intended to accentuate their inability to comprehend

and only lasted for a small portion of the allotted class time, and after the class was visibly shaken, he started over and explained, still in Spanish, that he would try to help the preservice teachers understand better. However, the second attempt would provide differentiation and employ sources, processes, and products that would enable the participatns to engage with the material despite the language barrier.

Experience

The preservice teachers could not prepare adequately for the experience; the only thing they knew was that they were going to have a guest speaker. The entire presentation was given in Spanish, and while they demonstrated a variety of Spanish skills (some had studied for a year or two, others had no experience), they were extremely limited in their ability to understand the instructions or the material. During the first part, presented as a normal lecture where everything was explained in normal terms at normal speed, the students quickly and noticeably shut down and turned off. They giggled and mumbled in English, their postures relaxed, and they leaned back with audible movements and gestures which indicated they were convinced they would not get anything out of the lesson. Very quickly they had decided the material was beyond their abilities, and they gave up.

Their reaction of frustration, fatigue, and surrender was the intent. This led to the next step, where the researchers hoped that the preservice teachers would visualize themselves in their students' situations and empathize with those who could succeed with proper support. The objective was to show the preservice teachers that when their students lack the tools to engage with the material, they, as teachers, must use a variety of resources to differentiate instruction and include all students in the lesson. Quickly, the

presentation style shifted from lecture to demonstration with written steps, sentence stems, improvised drawings, and gestures. For example, the task was subdivided into four steps, and each was addressed sequentially with a numerical label at the beginning. Then, the teacher drew a picture of the task (e.g. bread and a knife), and then mimed the task (cutting the bread). Once the students visibly understood the task, he proceeded to the next, and so on, until each was complete. Furthermore, strategic vocabulary words were written on the board along with specific ordering words for each step, such as first, second, etc., that matched word stems on strips of paper distributed to the students. After the presentation, they worked as a group to order the sentence stems and then narrate in Spanish the subtasks for each step to ensure comprehension of the process and the proper order. These small groups (about four) collaborated among themselves, which utilized individuals' various levels of understanding and experience with language. Consequently, one would pick up on a piece here and there as the material was presented, and together, they informed the rest of their group, which facilitated group understanding and progress toward completing the task. Because steps were broken down and presented in various means such as impromptu sketches and graphic organizers, and because they were allowed to collaborate, all the students quickly demonstrated general understanding. The final task built on ordering sentence stems with indicators (first, next, etc.) while combining them with words and phrases that reflected the steps of the task they were to complete and culminated in making a *torta* sandwich, which they then ate.

As the instructional methods changed and they grasped the material better, there was another noticeable change in their engagement and their attitude: away from

rendition and toward enthusiasm and optimism. They, in a sense, woke up and saw that as they began picking up on words and meaning they were following the material, and they saw themselves succeeding where previously they had given up. With each completed step, they became more excited, which brought more confidence. This, in turn, reinforced abilities and prompted further success. The groups were universally able to complete this task, and comments soared as they claimed that they never knew they could learn something taught in Spanish.

Empathy

While this outcome was encouraging, the objective to encourage empathy toward their own students, as preservice teachers, was achieved because they emerged from the project with better understanding and empathy. During the pre-activity dialogue with the preservice teachers, tools and practices to connect with others were discussed as the preservice teachers focused on simple activities that are unrealistic when working with students with diverse abilities and understanding. They felt confident they could effectively differentiate for those who did not understand with simple tasks such as trans providing translations, showing pictures, or re-explaining difficult concepts. The post-activity dialogue, however, illustrated that they had recognized their own limitations and that they had metaphorically extended these obstacles to their own students' limitations. They noticed that they did not lack the intelligence or the skills to know how to make a sandwich; they lacked the tools and language skills to access that information. On one hand, they noticeably connected their own situation with the target situation through body language, posture, and nodding heads, which illustrated they understood their roles as teachers and their students' needs in new, and intended, ways. On the other hand, they

commented on the processes and resources used during the project, recognizing their instrumentality in helping them learn the target tasks. Through the process, they also realized the value of home-language peer support, since talking to each other in English helped them understand the instructions in Spanish. Before, many were against allowing students to speak in their home language; they felt students needed to speak in English only in school. While there was no drastic shift toward exceptional differentiation tasks in their immediate conversation and discussion, they slowly began to realize the need for differentiation, which subsequently led to deeper thought in planning strategies. They saw that simple translation or similar practices would not help the students engage with the concepts; rather, they needed deeper connections with their students, more time invested in lesson preparation, and strategies similar to those used in the demonstration. They began to understand that understanding was tied to experience.

One month later, after preservice teachers had time to digest their new understandings and implement them in their lessons, they planned much more meaningful lessons for ELLs with and without LD. Before the project, preservice teachers felt that projecting an article on the board or providing students with pictures were acceptable and efficient ESL strategies. However, after the project, preservice teachers independently updated their lesson plans with strategies of the mechanical task from class in their more abstract-based lessons. One example of a better-developed idea was: "Write the words and put the pictures on the board for the students to listen for within the story. The students can also act out or draw a way to use the word that would explain the definition." This change clearly showed new levels of understanding. While additional experience is optimal, it was encouraging to see this intrinsic change. Another preservice teacher wrote

she would “Allow students to work with partners when prompted with questions before sharing. Students may speak in their native language if needed with their partners.” And yet another said, “I will encourage ELL students to make connections to their background knowledge and share with the class. This will bring culture and more connections into our discussion.” Ultimately, these comments indicated that through the project they developed awareness and empathy for their students because they were placed in a similar situation. They experienced frustration and hopelessness when they did not understand and had no idea how they could fix it. They could recognize those emotions as what their own students will feel if their instruction is too advanced because of differences in culture or abilities.

Conclusion

By modeling a differentiated approach to teaching a difficult concept, the collaborative team of two university faculty from different disciplines pushed preservice teachers to experience the classroom from the perspective of a student who needed additional language and literacy supports. While similar collaborative projects may be equally effective in developing empathy in urban educational settings, the lessons learned in this rural setting were particularly impactful due to the homogenous nature of this group of preservice teachers’ cultural and social backgrounds. The developed empathetic perspective was essential for preservice participants, as the majority planned to teach in rural settings where, according to Barrio (2017), challenges persist in the areas of over and under identification for ELLs with LD, as well as in areas of geographic isolation, limited resources, and professional development access. Branching out across disciplines using new approaches helped the students make connections. They are often

faced with the challenge of not knowing what they do not know, and while instructors can tell them what they should change or do differently, helping them experience it and recognize it themselves makes a greater impact. Furthermore, the collaboration opened up new lines of communication across disciplines and has provided further opportunities to collaborate in the future.

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Sharing Stories, Making Music, and Creating Authors: Literature-Based Musical Extensions as Shared Experiences

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Abstract

Read alouds can be musically enhanced by adding movement, providing recorded music, singing along, speaking rhythmically or chanting, inserting sound effects, and playing instruments. Children develop as writers when they have opportunities to tell their own stories about these musiking activities and have them recorded by a proficient writer. Exploring literature through movement and music is the impetus for children to collaboratively compose original text when they serve as the shared experience in the Language Experience Approach (LEA). Through repeated opportunities for responding to musical engagement in print, children quickly learn that the written word is a useful and effective way to communicate their ideas with others and provides a solid foundation for their future success as writers by increasing their confidence as authors.

Introduction

Musical extensions to children's literature can promote collaborative writing using the Language Experience Approach (LEA). The repetitive phrases, predictable patterns, rhyming words, and music-related topics found in many picture books make them ideal for reading along, adding actions, singing songs, creating sound effects, supplementing with

recorded music or playing instruments. These music-making activities, then, serve as a catalyst for composing original text. While read alouds are a popular shared experience for LEA in many early childhood classrooms, real-life experiences supply additional content and increase personal relevance. Like cooking together or going on a field trip, making music provides children with new vocabulary and concepts that can be integrated into the LEA to enrich learning.

Language Experience Approach

In the Language Experience Approach (Van Allen, 1970, 1976; Stauffer, 1976), children use their own words about a shared experience to produce readable text. LEA builds a strong link between verbal and written communication (Van Allen, 1970) as children see the teacher transcribing their natural language, regardless of grammatical accuracy, into print. Through LEA, the teacher serves as a guide and scribe to facilitate children's greater understanding of the "processes" of writing. As a guide, the teacher uses appropriate questioning techniques to scaffold children's construction of a written group message. As a scribe, the teacher eliminates physical barriers, such as developing fine motor skills and limited eye-hand coordination, to child-written text. The topic's connection to personal experience ensures that the text produced is both familiar and comfortable. Consequently, it possesses a level of predictability and readability that helps children read and write words that are already a part of their oral vocabulary (Padak & Rasinski, 1999).

LEA is an effective means of facilitating reading ability and supporting writing development using child-dictated text. Taking dictation is pivotal to introducing young children to the purpose of writing and functions of print (Tunks & Giles, 2009). Making a

record of children's actual words, including dialect and vocabulary (Morrow, 2014), teaches young children that writing records an experience to be enjoyed later or shared with someone not present (Tunks & Giles, 2017). Additionally, taking dictation helps children visualize the speech-to-text connection while instilling a basic knowledge of sound-symbol relationship and conventions of print, such as capitalization and punctuation (Tunks & Giles, 2009).

Benefits of Music

Music, rhythm, and rhyme are important learning tools that support early mathematical thinking (Geist & Geist, 2008) and enhance language and literacy development (Gromko, 2005). Music increases brain function, promotes complex thinking, and creates cognitive connections which help make it easier for individuals to remember information (Davies, 2000). Further, music builds listening skills while improving attention and memory (Hill-Clarke & Robinson, 2003) "because the beat, the melody, and the harmonies serve as carriers for the semantic content" (Jensen, 2001, p. 41). Singing songs helps students learn phonics and gain phonemic awareness (Routman, 2002; Zarrillo, 2007); recognize patterned and predictable text, rhyme and rhythm; and build sight word vocabulary (Miller, 2002).

To respect young children's activity in making music, the National Association for Music Educators (2018) advocates for "intentionally responsive, play-based, developmentally appropriate music engagement opportunities" (para. 3). Such musical experiences promote socialization and feelings of belonging (Giles & Fresne, 2016) while providing a natural outlet for creativity and self-expression. By pairing the innate tendency in children to express themselves musically (musical arts) with the desire to spin a tale

(language arts), the teacher pulls from different arts areas that – when experienced together – can fuel the inherent creativity of a child.

Linking Literature and Music

The most effective read-alouds are those in which children are actively involved rather than passively listening (Dickinson, 2001). When children actively listening to incorporate movement, singing, voice manipulation, or playing instruments, they communicate their translation of story elements and their understanding of such literary devices as tone, imagery, and foreshadowing.

Adding Movement

Books with a few characters or events can be dramatized with specific, descriptive facial expressions or motions. Simplicity in actions and an awareness of space are essential for incorporating movement. At its most basic, the movement added could be standing on cue. For example, an individual child or small groups of children can each be assigned a color in Sheena Roberts' book *We All Go Traveling By* or *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss. When their assigned color is read, they stand up and sit back down. Other options are to provide a simple single-colored prop (scarves, streamers, bandana, construction paper, or bean bag) to stand and hold high when their assigned color is heard or to move from their seat to a place on the reading carpet. Actions can be made more complex by having children stand and emulate the various modes of transportation featured in *We All Go Traveling By*, like "A long blue train goes chuff-chuff-chuff." *My Many Colored Days* provides an opportunity for increased complexity by having children move in the same way as each animal, such as kicking their heels like the horse for red. *Color Dance* by Ann Jonas, with its large colored scarves, and *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*

by Eric Carle, with its cast of colorful animal characters, can both be enacted in the similar ways.

Simple motions added to *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams increases the enjoyment of this cumulative tale. As the lady is walking home, she finds a pair of shoes. When the story introduces the shoe, the children (standing) stomp and say, “Clomp, clomp” with the reader. When the lady comes upon a pair of pants that wiggle, children stand in place and do the twist while saying, “Wiggle, wiggle.” As the story continues, the lady comes across a shirt, gloves, hat, and pumpkin head, which all suggest engaging movements for children to produce.

Animal characters often provide intriguing opportunities for children to create their own movements. *My Farm Friends* by Wendell Minor practically begs that children move along with the featured farmyard animals. In her *Good Day Book*, J.J. L’Heureux depicts penguins and seals with descriptors such as “smile,” “jump for joy,” “look for a rainbow,” and “spread your wings.” *Dance Away* by George Shannon allows children to join Rabbit in his favorite dance, which is repeated eleven times throughout this riveting story:

Left two three kick	Take 3 steps to the left and kick
Right two three kick	Take 3 steps to the right and kick
Left skip Right skip	Hop on left foot then hop on right foot
Turn around	Turn around in place

Dance of the Rain Gods by Julee Dickerson Thompson presents a story where children can translate weather events into movement. Unlike the repetitive movements in many stories, this book unfolds the events of a thunderstorm, allowing children to continue

in the current movement while listening for the clues to change their movement as the storm develops and subsides.

Providing Recorded Music

While musical recordings can enhance the mood of just about any story, recorded music should be used sparingly with the goal of providing a balance between opportunities for children to hear and experience music. Jazz music may be played with books such as *Mama Don't Allow* by Thacher Hurd and *Rap A Tap Tap* by Leo & Diane Dillon while a Bach partita is appropriate to accompany *I See A Song* by Eric Carle and Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" works well with *Tuesday* by David Wiesner. *Berlioz, The Bear* by Jan Brett presents the trouble caused by a bumblebee as the musicians travel to their performance. Paired this text with the book, "Flight of the Bumblebee" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov provides a descriptive, auditory experience to complement the story and pictures.

Popular songs for dancing the cha cha, like the instrumental versions of "Oye Como Va" by Tito Puente and "Quizas, Quizas, Quizas" by Osvaldo Farrés, are clear choices for playing with *Cha Cha Chimps* by Julia Durango. *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae features a variety of dances and has been paired with African percussion, Chopin's "Minute Waltz," Joan Jett and the Blackhearts' "I Love Rock and Roll," Isaac Albeniz's "Latin Flamenco," the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra's "Tea for Two," Jimmy Shand's "Scottish Country Dance," and *Songs from A Secret Garden* when reading aloud to accompany the different types of dances performed by the various animals throughout the story (Hall, 2017). Adding music allows children to learn new terminology, like "waltz,"

"tango," and "reel," within the context of a story while looking at the pictures and experiencing the sounds associated with those types of dance.

Singing Along

Some books lend themselves to be sung using familiar tunes (Miller, 2008). To find a tune, begin by searching through the songs children in the class already know. As a class activity, make a list of songs that everyone knows. These songs become the 'library of tunes' that can be used to sing books. For example, *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams is a good example of a book that can be sung using the tune from "Are You Sleeping?" The teacher sings each repeated phrase first then students echo-sing the phrase as follows:

Teaching sings: I went walking.	(Tune: Are you sleeping)
Children sing: I went walking.	(Tune: Are you sleeping)
Teaching sings: What did you see?	(Tune: Brother John)
Children sing: What did you see?	(Tune: Brother John)
Teaching sings: I saw a black cat	(Tune: Morning bells are ringing)
Children sing: I saw a black cat	(Tune: Morning bells are ringing)
Teaching sings: Looking at me.	(Tune: Ding, ding, dong.)
Children sing: Looking at me.	(Tune: Ding, ding, dong.)

Books with question-and-answer sequences, like those presented by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* and *Polar Bear, Polar Bear*, can be sung to "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." *Baby Angel* by Jane Cowen-Fletcher can also be sung to this tune to create a calming, sleep-like atmosphere.

Folk tunes are usually easy to sing because they have simple rhythms and a singing range that is comfortable for young children (Wilson, 2003). "Rain, Rain Go Away"

provides an ideal rhythm and tune for the repetitive refrain "Honk-honk. Beep-beep. City rhythm, City beat" appearing in *The City Sings a Song* by Abigail Tabby. The same tune can be used with the recurring phrase Phyllis Root includes throughout *One Duck Stuck* - "Help! Help! Who can help?"

Many songs, like "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" and "The Wheels on the Bus," appear in picture book format. Both traditional versions and creative adaptations of these well-known songs offer opportunities for singing along. Some books include music notation in the back of the book, which is useful for teachers who can read music, while others provide recordings. *My Aunt Came Back* and *There Was a Man and He Was Mad*, adapted by John Feierabend, are two folk songs that have a professional recording created specifically for young children available free online for teachers. Recordings with a lot of instruments in the background, however, should be avoided, since these may cause children to struggle to find the melody when singing.

After recurring exposure to pairing stories with singing, children may be motivated to make up a song about a character or take repeated words or phrases from a book to create their own, unique song. These children can be encouraged to record the lyrics (words) and their tune (music notation) on paper (Stauffer, 2003). Like early attempts at writing, their music notation may include a combination of scribbles, dots, lines, and various symbols drawn on paper that – for the child – represents their tune and should be accepted as valuable.

Rhythmic Speaking or Chanting

Books with embedded chants or a repetitive refrain, such as *Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino, *Can I Help?* by Marilyn Janovitz, and *Five Little Monkeys*

series by Eileen Christelow, invite children to actively participate by engaging in rhythmic reading that ranges from lively to soothing. *Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel challenges children to join in chanting the oldest son's great long name while the rhyming lines from *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox and Jane Dyer can be gently read in unison as if it were a spoken lullaby.

Children can also participate in a story by manipulating their voice to represent different actions or characters. In *Mortimer* by Robert Munsch, children speak, "Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump" with an ascending voice as characters go upstairs and a descending voice as the characters go back downstairs. Children can also change their voices to match the different characters who say "Mortimer, be quiet" throughout the book. When the mother speaks, children should use a high-pitch 'mommy' voice. When seventeen brothers and sisters yell "in a tremendous, loud voice," children can shout the words. Similarly, vocal inflection can be used to distinguish the dialogue of different animal characters in *Hattie and the Fox* by Mem Fox and *The Little Red Hen* by Paul Galdone.

Inserting Sound Effects

Sound effects can be added to stories using vocal exploration, body percussion or found objects. Stories with animal characters, such as *Bear Noel* by Oliver Dunrea, *Jump, Frog, Jump* by Robert Kalan, *Hello, Day!* by Anita Lobel, *There was a Coyote Who Swallowed a Flea* by Jennifer Ward, *Seals on the Bus* by Lenny Hort, and *Mommies Say Shhh!* by Patricia Polacco become more animated when children bark, moo, hiss, and growl on cue. Children can tap their head or stomp their feet to accompany the "Hic, hic, hic" in *Skeleton Hiccups* by Margery Schindler Cuyler or to keep the skunka tanka beat in

Tanka Tanka Skunk by Steve Webb. *Achoo, Bang, Crash: The Noisy Alphabet* by Ross MacDonald provides opportunity for more complex sound effects as children devise ways to simulate all 26 uses of onomatopoeia, such as dropping books to make a bang, ripping paper for clothes tearing, and rattling keys for jingling bells.

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney entices children to use their voice, body, and objects to join Max as he drums out rhythm patterns to imitate the sounds he hears, such as the passing train or pigeons flying. Children can say the sounds in the story, which are represented by onomatopoeia, like "pat... pat tat" and "cling, clang, da-bang." Children can imitate Max to play each rhythm using available objects that are hollow or have an empty space underneath, such as tabletops, boxes, and garbage cans, as drums and their fingers or unsharpened pencils as drumsticks.

Playing Instruments

Incorporating a few purposefully selected instruments capitalizes on young children's innate enthusiasm for all things noisy and active. Many instruments can be played in different ways – tapping the held instrument with an open palm, against a leg, or lightly on a shoe – to produce different timbres, or quality of sounds. This varies the experience further while maintaining interest and enjoyment (Connor, 2004). As children continue to play instruments, they become more "aware of the acoustic characteristics" (Zalar, Kordes, & Kafol, 2015, p. 1328) and, while the outward appearance may appear to be simple sound or noise, children experience a person identification "with the sound of the chosen instrument" (Zalar et al., 2015, p. 1326) in addition to an understanding of playing as a group.

When choosing the best instruments for young children, consider ease of manipulation, durability, and sound quality. For children who are acquiring fine motor skills, bigger instruments are easier to hold and control. Look for larger areas to strike and thicker handles and mallets. Well-made instruments are a worthwhile investment, since cheap or homemade instruments break easily becoming more expensive when replaced regularly. An egg shaker will last longer than a plastic Easter egg filled with beans or rice, which can grow mold or crack open. Poorly crafted instruments produce an inferior sound, making a $7 steel triangle a better choice than a nickel finish triangle for $3 because it creates a richer and clearer sound. Several simple instruments designed specifically for early childhood and early elementary classrooms that possess these desired qualities are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Recommended Classroom Instruments

	How to Create Sound	Cost
Egg Shakers	Hold egg in one hand while tapping it with the open palm of the other hand.	$2.00 each
Jingle Bells	Hold in one hand while tapping the bells with the other hand.	$18.00
Tambourine	Lay tambourine flat on a tabletop or floor. Tap the edge of the tambourine. One to three children may play simultaneously.	$12.00
Tick-Tock with Mallet	Holding the handle in one hand and the mallet in the other, tap or scrape one or both sides, alternately. (Each side has a different sound.)	$5.00
Triangle with Striker	Grasp the triangle holder and use the striker to hit the bottom or side.	$7.00
Lollipop Drum with Mallet	Tap with mallet. If the drum is patted with an open hand, the mallet may be used to create a	$15.00

	“found” instrument by tapping on something that is hollow, like a trash can.	

Froggy Gets Dressed by Jonathon London uses onomatopoeia for the sound of each clothing item, and any or all of the nine clothing items in the story can be made using different instruments, such as striking the tick-tock with the mallet for "flop, flop, flop." *Snake Alley Band* by Elizabeth Nygaard and *Thump-Thump, Rat-a-Tat-Tat* by Gene Baer also use different onomatopoeia patterns to depict various sounds which can each be played by a different instrument.

Instruments can be used to keep the steady beat with books, such as *Drummer Hoff* by Barbara Emberly and Ed Emberly, *Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb* by Al Perkins Gurney, and *Possum Come A-Knockin'* by Nancy van Laan. To effectively add instrumental sound effects to books, incorporate the suggestions found in Table 2.

Table 2

Tips for Playing Instruments

Demonstrate before distributing	Modeling ensures that children play the instrument correctly (preventing damage) and with the correct rhythm.
One instrument for every three children	This preserves the quality of sound and increases on-task behavior. Immediately repeating the activity several times allows every child a chance to play an instrument.
Always involve all children	Children without instruments should be assigned simple movements, such as shifting weight from one foot to the other, patsching (patting legs), and stiff-arm clapping (like the mouth of an alligator).

The books suggested in this article are only a small sample of the vast possibilities, and many books may be enhanced with movement and music in multiple ways. For instance, the book *Nine-In-One, Grr, Grr!* presents a story originally told by Blia Xiong, adapted by Cathy Spagnoli, and illustrated by Nancy Hom. This traditional Hmong story from Laos, explaining why there are so few tigers, can be read using movements, songs, and instruments individually or in combination to accompany the story as it is read aloud. The three main characters can be represented with instruments (drums for Tiger, hand bells for Bird, and gongs for Shao) and depicted with motions (by showing their "claws" for Tiger, flapping their "wings" for Bird, and pointing to their forehead to portray thinking for Shao) while children sing Tiger's short song ("Nine in one, grr, grr") with the absolute pitches, "G-E-G" or the intervals, "*sol*-*mi*-*sol*," which are the starting pitches of "Rain, Rain Go Away."

Creating the Text

Each of these musically enhanced read aloud experiences can serve as the impetus for children to collaboratively compose original text using LEA. Language experiences enable young children to understand the difference between spoken and written language, which is critical for literacy learning in the primary years of schooling (Christie, 2013). As the teacher expands and extends oral language based on shared musical experiences, students are supported to write about these occurrences. The text will be influenced by first-hand experiences and may vary in format from lists, labels, and charts to recounts, how-tos and stories. Regardless of form, the text is always child generated and teacher supported. By asking questions like "How can we put that in writing for someone that wasn't there?" teachers position children to create more elaborate, detailed text.

As with other group writing strategies, LEA capitalizes on the social nature of children and uses the energy of collaboration to make young children authors. Through LEA, children observe the process of transferring thoughts from oral language to written words and, as a result, begin to see themselves as capable writers. Seeing their words in print has a powerful impact, which is strengthened by hearing these words read. By encouraging and supporting children as they begin to think and act more like authors, they gain a sense of accomplishment and self-satisfaction that sustains their interest in writing and encourages future attempts to write (Tunks & Giles, 2007).

Conclusion

Children benefit from opportunities to explore literature through movement and music, tell their own stories about these musiking activities, and have them recorded by a

proficient writer. Movement and music, which are forms of communication, interconnect with the communication of literature (Sharp, Coneway, Hindman, Garcia, & Bingham, 2016). Through repeated opportunities for responding to musical engagement in print, children quickly learn that the written word is a useful and effective way to communicate their ideas with others. Using LEA to scaffold children through the process of making a written account of their personal experiences teaches children there is a real-life purpose for writing and provides a solid foundation for their future success as writers by increasing their confidence as authors.

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From the Field:

Family Literacy Festivals and Family Literacy Workshops: Different Means to Meet Common Goals

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Abstract

This article describes characteristics of successful family literacy programs and explores the benefits of such programs for children and their families. Experiential learning, place-based education, and the Language Experience Approach (LEA) are combined in these preschool projects with the purpose of helping young children gain oral and written language skills and supporting parents in their role as literacy teachers at home. Ideas and strategies for creating and replicating similar family literacy programs in a variety of settings are provided.

A meta-analysis of research on the impact of home and parent programs on young children's early literacy skills was found to have a moderate to large impact on both oral language skills and general cognitive skills
(National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

Introduction

Early literacy development is often thought to begin in the preschool and kindergarten years. Certainly, preschools and kindergartens are literacy rich environments where teachers support and teach early literacy skills. However, literacy development begins at birth as parents sing lullabies, read stories, do fingerplays, and have meaningful, back-and-forth conversations with their child. Thus, not only does early literacy learning begin before formal schooling begins, but parents are the child's first literacy teacher (Cecil, Baker, & Lozano, 2015). Research shows that children who come from print-rich homes generally read earlier than children who come from homes where print is not as accessible (Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Wasik & Van Horn, 2012). With this is mind, teachers seek to partner with parents, helping them to be more comfortable, knowledgeable, and effective in their continuing role as their child's first and most important teacher. One path for achieving this goal is implementing family literacy programs (Morrow, 2019). In this article, the authors will reveal key components and benefits of family literacy programs along with specific details of two successful family literacy programs designed to fit unique communities of learners.

Some Key Components of Quality Family Literacy Programs to Consider

As is apparent in the name, family literacy programs are about families, not just children. Swick (2009) notes three key quality indicators that effect success in family literacy programs: *collaboration*, *flexibility*, and *community partnerships*. First, parents and

children are both involved in literacy activities and learning together. This looks different in different programs. For example, in the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy Program, parents take reading classes daily while their children attend a quality preschool program at the same site. Then, parents are supported as they use their new reading skills to read books to their children (2019). In other cases, parents are more literate and more comfortable and confident reading aloud with children. They may also be more knowledgeable in choosing children's literature and enriching activities or conversations to accompany the literature. Second, programs are flexible, giving parents multiple options for participating. For example, this may mean flexible scheduling, choosing whether to take advantage of meals served at the program, or choosing between paper books and audio books to take home. Third, community partnerships are important, showing commitment and buy-in. For example, when partners in the communities provide resources such as a meeting place, discounts on learning materials, or advertising space, they communicate that they believe in the potential of the program and are willing to devote resources to improving the quality of the community through the program.

Importance of Family Literacy Programs and Research-based Goals

Family literacy programs are important because they positively impact families in many ways. Family literacy programs improve school readiness, enhance children's literacy skills, boost parent literacy skills, and educate parents (Cecil, Baker, & Lozano, 2015; Swick, 2009). When designing a family literacy program, research-based goals must be at the heart of the planning and development (Morrow, 2019). As time passes, plans are likely to evolve as different people join the leadership team and as families give feedback. Goals will need to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly; however, the

leadership team must focus the primary components of the program on literacy and maintain a commitment to literacy and family engagement (Sullivan & von Witzleben, 2013).

Two Different Family Literacy Programs

Once Upon a Time Family Literacy Festivals and *Prime Time Family Literacy Workshops* are both responses to this body of research, each conducted in a different community. Although each of these family literacy programs has different organizational strategies and dynamics, some key indicators of quality and the application of the research-based goals are very similar. In each of these programs, low-income families are targeted based on the location of the program. Additionally, children and guardians attend together for fun and literacy learning, there is built-in flexibility along with some defined responsibilities, and community support is strong in each program; all of these are quality indicators of successful family literacy programs (Swick, 2009).

The research-based evidence that informed both family literacy programs outlined here is home-based and literacy-rich. First, children who enjoy early reading success typically have homes where reading is supported by 1) adults who read to them regularly, 2) good attitudes about reading, and 3) easy access to age-appropriate books (Barbour, 1998; Silvern, 1991; Tompkins & Rogers, 2019). Furthermore, informative studies reveal that the greatest predictor of early reading is based on children's positive interactions with parents and books in the early childhood years (Kennedy & Caspe, 2013). Parents can achieve these positive interactions with their children by making reading in the home environment 3-4 times per week a family routine and continuing the literacy support by engaging in meaningful conversations and interactions about the stories in the books

(Bracey, 1996; Hiebert & Pearson, 2000). These research findings and others like them that indicate the importance of home support for reading were the basis for the goals of each program. The specifics of each program will be elucidated through more detailed descriptions.

Once Upon a Time Family Literacy Festival

Once Upon a Time is an annual event designed to serve the needs of low-income families with young children, but the event is open to all members of the community, and, typically, a very diverse group attends. Through focused advertising and choosing a location that is within walking distance of low-income neighborhoods, the target audience is consistently reached. The event has taken place at a variety of sites including a library, local schools, and a centrally located recreation center. Each time, the indoor area is set up with at least eight easily distinguished literacy stations with access to an outdoor area that can be used, weather permitting. Families with young children are invited to rotate through the stations during the day. Flexibility is built in, as families are given choices as to their start time, the sequence of the stations they visit, and the duration of time they spend at the overall event. Teachers and pre-service teacher candidates use developmentally appropriate teaching methods to engage children and their parents in early literacy activities that entertain and educate. Verbal and written reinforcement, as well as modeling, is given to help parents understand how to mimic the methods at home. After participating in the literacy activities, children are invited to select one or two age-appropriate books to take home with them and call their own.

Considerations for replicating a Once Upon a Time Literacy Festival. Considerations for replicating this type of family literacy program are presented in the

sections which follow.

Starting out. *Who would be willing to get things organized?* Find or create a core group of people who are concerned about young children, families, and educational success. Some possibilities to consider include local early childhood organizations, adult small groups within a church, local pediatricians, or an interested individual's personal group of educator friends from different organizations in the community.

Overall vision. *Who in your community has a vested interest in early literacy?* Brainstorm a list; then, encourage the core group to divide and conquer the task of communicating the literacy goals and possible ways the group could be involved. For example, local institutes of higher learning such as universities, junior colleges, and technical schools have groups of students with specific skills who seek out ways to engage in service learning and community volunteering. Churches may be willing community partners and could participate by collecting new and gently used books to give to children at the event as part of an outreach ministry. Likewise, a centrally located church in the community may be willing to be a drop off point for book donations or a storage place for books and materials. Even large business chains are often willing to participate in small community enrichment. For example, McDonald's paid for the printing of over 6,000 *Once Upon a Time* invitation bookmarks that were sent home with children from schools and childcare centers. In addition, the bookmarks were distributed through the community in every kid's meal ordered during the two weeks prior to the event. See Figure 1 for possible community groups to consult.

Figure 1

Possible Community Groups to Consult

Who in your community cares about early literacy?

- Institutes of higher learning
- Schools
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Churches
- Hospitals and the medical community
- Child care centers
- Service organizations such as the Junior League and Future Teachers of America
- Libraries
- City government
- Local industry and businesses
- Chamber of Commerce
- Your regional resource and referral agency
- Local newspapers and radio stations
- Book stores and toy stores
- Child-focused organizations such as The Department of Family Services, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Head Start

Logistics*. Where and when should the event take place?* Just as each child is unique and teaching practices must be individualized to best meet their needs (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), each community enjoys a uniqueness that requires the organizers of events like this one to differentiate accordingly. As spaces are considered, coordinators should consider perceived "ownership" within the community. For example, a high school that is shared by the whole community, a city park, or a centrally located gym are examples of spaces that could appeal to a more diverse group than a neighborhood elementary school that is likely to draw most of its participants from that specific school's population.

Typically, *Once Upon a Time* is held in the early spring as part of the community's promotion for enrolling preschoolers into local programs. Other options communities could consider are scheduling the event to closely coincide with the opening of the school year or to have the event coincide with an internationally or nationally recognized time to honor children such as the National Association for the Education of Children's (NAEYC) Week of the Young Child scheduled each April. Checking community and local school calendars can help the committee determine possible dates for maximizing attendance. If the event is going to be held outside, then, of course, seasonal weather conditions must be considered.

Putting it all together. *How do you make it happen?* The big question is always "Where do I get the funding?" Believe it or not, a family literacy event can be successful with very little funding because of so many in-kind services being performed and service organizations providing their own teaching materials. However, it is nice to be able to have professionally made signage, parent hand-outs, posters, certificates of service, and other paper goods. Donations and grants have been a primary source for these materials at this family literacy festival. See Figures 2 and 3 for possible sources of donations and funding.

Figure 2

Possible Sources for Donations

Sources for Donations of Materials and Services:

- Water and refreshments for volunteers-Grocery stores, discount stores and restaurants
- Paper, copies and administrative assistance-Chamber of Commerce, Churches and businesses
- Books-Churches, schools, service organizations and businesses
- Use of tables and chairs-schools, child care centers, universities
- Canopies/Tents for outdoor events-Funeral homes, tailgating groups, city government, local National Guard unit, farmer's markets

Figure 3

Possible Sources for Donations

Possible Grant Sources:

- Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Jr. League and other local service organizations
- Local industry
- Church outreach missions
- Chain stores
- Academic and honor societies
- Local Literacy Missions
- Corporate sponsors

Within the core group previously mentioned, someone must take responsibility as the lead coordinator. The coordinator's function is basically ways and means—access funding, assess needs, and then delegate, delegate, delegate! Some of the committees/responsibilities that have been developed for *Once Upon a Time* over the years include literacy activities, marketing, book zone, volunteer central, manager of childcare providers, and manager of information booths. See Figure 4 for possible committee assignments.

Figure 4

Possible Committee Assignments

Suggested Committees and their Responsibilities:

Assistant Coordinator:
- Recruit committee chairpersons and keep them on task with frequent communication
- Help people network
- Remind all committee chairpersons to keep a log of volunteers and contact information
- Secure site for event
- Recruit helpers to load and unload materials as well as clean up after event

Literacy Activities:
- Contact, consult with, and organize at least eight qualified presenters
- Communicate literacy activity expectations
- Procure usage of canopies/tents
- Provide consistent signage for each activity tent

Marketing:
- Design visual advertising such as posters, bookmarks, banners and yard signs
- Determine numbers needed and make copies
- Create radio and newspaper announcements
- Create internet presence
- Recruit people to distribute bookmarks to childcare center and schools
- Recruit people to display signage and collect signage after the event

Book Zone:
- Procure boxes or tubs as collection vessels and number them
- Design information sheet for boxes with name/goals of event, drop off site, and deadlines
- Make master list of box numbers and who got each box
- Distribute collection boxes throughout community
- Call or visit those who do not return collection box
- Recruit for/oversee Book Hospital where books are cleaned, repaired, and sorted
- Recruit volunteers to move boxes of books to event site
- Procure shelves, rugs, and tables to create a BOOK ZONE within a large canopy or tent
- Arrange materials so that there is a definite entrance, some cozy reading areas, and books are grouped according to reading levels
- Recruit readers
- Recruit people to conduct exit interviews
- Make arrangements for remaining books at end of event

Volunteer Central:
- Have ribbons ready to designate volunteers
- Make sign-in sheets for volunteers
- Have blank community service certificates ready to complete as per sign in sheet
- Procure ice chests and refreshments
- Have "tool box" ready: duct tape, clear tape, pens, paper, stapler
- Have updated first aid kit on site
- Complete certificates and give to volunteers when they return their ribbon

Prime Time Family Literacy Workshops

The Prime Time Family Literacy program is made possible through funding from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Grant. As such, the target audience consists of low-income families who have a 4-year-old and one or more children in the family who have been designated as "at-risk" by their local school system, including families participating in a Head Start program. The weekly sessions take place over the course of six weeks. The sessions begin with a meal, and then the families participate in a storytelling session that includes engaging in developmentally appropriate interactive literacy experiences based on the book. The preschoolers then work in their parents' laps or on the floor with their parents to write and draw in response to the story, typically Language Experience stories (Padak & Rasinski, 1999), and then rotate through interactive learning centers as parents supervise and encourage free play. After learning center time, the children share what they had written and drawn in response to the story and are given a new book to take home to read over the next week. Extra books and literacy resources are given as door prizes, so that families complete the program with a beginning library of their own. The community partners for this program include the state, the local school district, the local university, and the neighborhood surrounding the school site where the event is held. Because the goals for each activity are aligned with the state Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), the children's skills can be measured and tracked. In the sections which follow, we describe the steps we took to facilitate program success and maximize student learning

Encouraging attendance. While writing the grant, steps were taken to encourage consistent attendance. The two most influential characteristics which seemed to have the

most impact on consistent family attendance were providing transportation to those who had none and providing meals for all. Other incentives such as giving door prizes, giving books to all families at each session, and rewarding attendance were also enjoyed by the participants.

Effective literacy strategies. One primary goal of this family literacy program was to teach parenting practices that encouraged early literacy in such a way that parents could replicate the steps at home. As parents practiced using literacy strategies, such as tracking print with their finger while reading to their children during the weekly sessions, they grew more comfortable with implementing the same strategies at home, hopefully, long after the series of workshops ended. Second, families watched as the leader modeled literacy behaviors such a discussing the cover of the book and building anticipation for the story before reading. In addition, pacing, the use of enthusiasm and drama through voice emphasis, and stopping to let the children help tell the story by describing what they noticed about the pictures on the page were further examples of storytelling strategies modeled for families. To strengthen the social act of reading, children were encouraged to sit in their parents' laps during the story. As enrichment activities associated with the story were implemented, families especially enjoyed opportunities for the children to dramatize the stories. Parents also learned to plan activities that were short in duration, recognize when their child was ready for a change of activities, and to get on the floor and play with children while talking, listening, and building on children's words and ideas. Finally, parents were encouraged to read to their children for at least 20 minutes each evening during a bedtime routine consisting of bathing, brushing teeth, reading books, and going to sleep.

Targeted skills and outcomes. Five specific literacy skills from Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development standards (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013) were targeted and assessed through performance-based measures and anecdotal records. The targeted skills included:

- **Language and Literacy Development 1**: Actively participate in role-playing, creative dramatics, fingerplays, nursery rhymes, and choral speaking. (4.4)
- **Language and Literacy 3**: With prompting and support, describe the role of the author and illustrator of a text. (4.2)
- **Language and Literacy Development 4**: With prompting and support, identify characters and some events from a story and several pieces of information from a text read aloud. (4.3)
- **Language and Literacy Development 6**: With prompting and support, recognize and produce rhyming words. (4.1)
- **Language and Literacy Development 7**: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and/or writing in response to a text read aloud, or to tell a story about a life experience or event. (4.2)

Each of the preschoolers met the targeted literacy goals by the end of the program. Furthermore, parents indicated they felt like they could and would continue the parenting and early literacy strategies they had learned during the family literacy program.

Summary

Family literacy programs have shown potential for helping children and parents be better prepared for formal schooling, helping parents develop alternative parenting strategies, and increasing parent and child literacy. This article provides ideas and

strategies for helping educators and community partners develop family literacy programs. With the provided descriptions of how each family literacy program was funded and operated, interested community members can pull together their own combination of resources to create a family literacy program that fits their community's available resources and needs.

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