

Talking and Drawing: Building oral language skills through a parent-child journaling activity in Northern Saskatchewan

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BACKGROUND

This poster reports on the development phase of a collaborative research project with J. Lim, Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP) from the Saskatchewan Health Authority. J. Lim initiated the development of a parent-child journaling activity to be integrated with local preschools. This collaboration was explored as a population-level, preventative approach to strengthen language and literacy development in a potentially at-risk region. Prior to pursuing broad-based implementation of the approach, J. Lim sought to develop a research study to examine (1) the effects and (2) the feasibility of the approach.

Contributions of the current CSD 900 Group:

(1) Development of background literature and rationale; (2) Support for development: Consent materials, study questionnaires, training materials for parents and educators.

Development of Background

Development of background and rationale focused on:

- Describing demographics of the target population linked to risk of poor literacy and education outcomes.
- Documenting existing evidence for the effects and feasibility of the proposed approach, as well as considerations for the target population.

Population

- > 25-50% of people in Northern Saskatchewan have completed a high school diploma compared to the provincial average of 80 -86% (Irvine, 2011).
- Education and literacy contribute to overall health and wellbeing (Population Health Unit, 2016).
- > Reading skills are fairly stable after grade 4, indicating a need for early intervention (Spira, 2005).

Evidence for Approach

- > Caesar and Nelson (2014) conducted research on a 5 week picture journaling activity in a bilingual school.
- Picture journaling:
 - Parents and children draw a picture about an interesting event.
 - Parent promotes language skills by asking questions, building on what the child says, and including event-specific vocabulary.
 - Teacher then discusses the same picture in the class to solidify the information with the child.
- > Half were given preschool aged books, half completed picture journaling. There was improvement in vocabulary and pre-literacy skills of the journaling group, and also high parental enjoyment and participation.

Likelihood of Parent Involvement

> Prior research indicated feasibility of similar projects in which parents of low SES families were asked to attend sessions, and complete logs and surveys about the project (O'Neil-Pirozzi, 2009).

Funding

Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) to fund the planned study through a grant.

Development of Method

Select Classroom

- School selected within target region.
- Morning and afternoon classes allow randomization.

Pre-Test Measures

- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, Second Edition (CTOPP-2) Sound Matching Subtest - phonological awareness.
- > Conversational Speech Sample vocabulary diversity, grammatical complexity.
- > Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument (ENNI) vocabulary diversity, grammatical
- Measure of Emergent Spelling.

Business As Usual Control

> 6 weeks - typical classroom

activities.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - 4 (PPVT-4).

<u>Intervention</u>

- > 6 weeks child sent home with drawing materials.
- > Parent and child will draw a picture of a meaningful event over the weekend and then discuss it.
- > Teacher will discuss the same drawing at circle

Post Intervention

- > Language and literacy measures repeated to examine effects of intervention.
- > Parents and teachers complete questionnaires regarding their experience and impressions.
- > Families in the BAU control will have the option to complete the journaling program.
- > This study has been adapted to fit the Northern Saskatchewan population and the resources available.
 - Caesar and Nelson (2014) used student clinicians to support children during circle time and when discussing the drawing.
 - The current study will use the teachers and available resources to support children during circle time.

Development of Materials

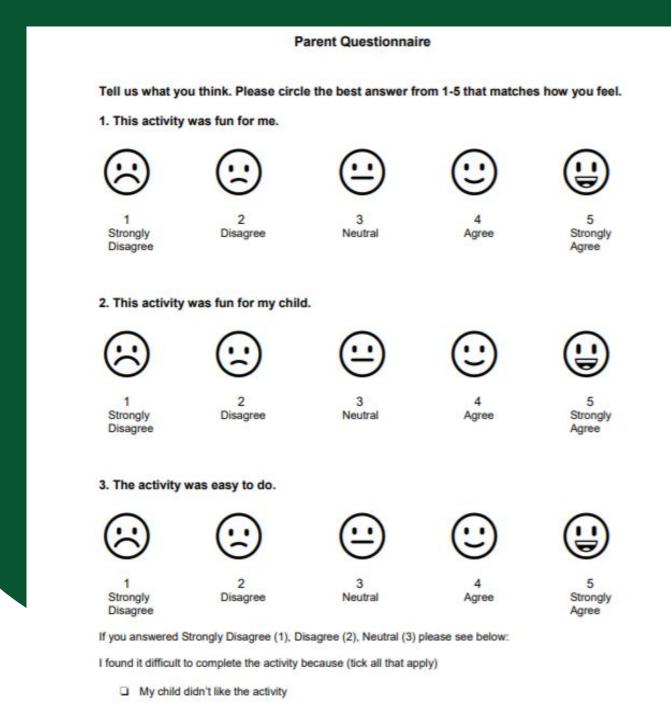
Materials were created using Taylor and Hamdy (2013) framework which discussed five phases of adult learning: dissonance, refinement, organization, feedback, and consolidation.

Parent and Teacher Questionnaires with Likert Scales:

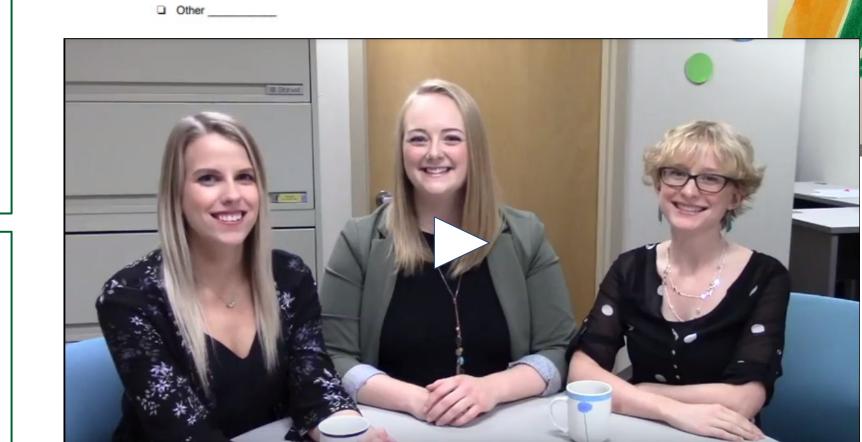
- > Developed to examine feasibility, perceived value of the project, and enjoyment.
- Allow the parent to reflect and provide feedback on the project and to promote consolidation of their learning.
- > To ensure understanding of the questions and reduce the likelihood of false data, they were developed to be accessible for parents with lower literacy levels.
- Wording choices of these measures were adapted to a grade 6 reading level. Wording was kept concise, clear, and avoided jargon.
- Include clear visuals (i.e., smiley faces matching each number on the scale) in order to promote understanding.

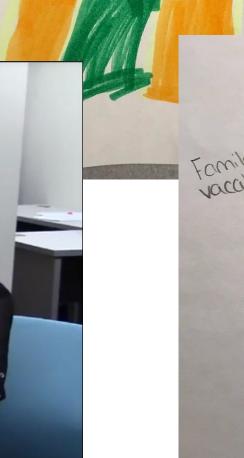
Training Video:

- Created to convey a concise, informative explanation of the project.
- > Gives parents specific strategies to promote enhanced vocabulary.
- Divided into two components:
- 1) Introductory video for exclusive use in this project.
- 2) General video that explains the procedure.
- General video promotes the use of this early intervention program across other health regions, should the results be favourable.
- > Designed to organize old and new knowledge and to highlight the importance of the project in a parent-friendly way.











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REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

Population Health Unit. Social Determinants of Health: Living and Working Conditions, August, 2016.

- > This project highlights the importance of clinician-driven research. This research was developed based on a need in a community, and can create positive outcomes for an at risk community.
- > It also draws attention to the potential benefits of involving parents in children's education, specifically for children who are at risk for poor literacy and vocabulary outcomes.
- > Early intervention for these children is crucial for success in education. Integrating parents into early intervention is an excellent strategy to promote success.

References:

Caesar, L. & Nelson, N. (2014). Parental involvement in language and literacy acquisition: A bilingual journaling approach. Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 30(3), 217-336. Irvine J, Quinn B, & Stockdale D. Northern Saskatchewan Health Indicators Report 2011. Athabasca Health Authority and Keewatin Yatthé and Mamawetan Churchill River. Regional Health Authorities. Population Health Unit, La Ronge, 2011. O'Neil-Pirozzi, T. M. (2009). Feasibility and benefit of parent participation in a program emphasizing preschool child language development while homeless. American Journal Of Speech-Language Pathology, 18(3), 252-263.

Spira, E.A., Bracken, S.S., & Fischel, J.E. (2005). Predicting improvement after first-grade. Reading Difficulties: The effects of oral language, emergent literacy, and behavior skills. Developmental Psychology, 41(1), 225-234. Taylor, D.C.M. & Hamdy, H (2013). Adult learning theories: Implications for learning and teaching in medical education: AMEE Guide No. 83. Medical Teacher, 35(11), 1561-1572.

> The study is currently under ethical review. A new group of students will be collecting and analyzing the data in the following year.