

Title: Collaborative Evaluation of the Use of Drama and Technology in a Family Literacy Program Developed by a School/University Partnership

Authors: Elizabeth Landerholm, Ed.D, Yi Hao, Ph.D, Cynthia Gehrie, Ph.D, Jill Tatz, M.A, Elfriede Pergams, M.A
Teacher Education Department, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago Il. 60625
Email: E-Landerholm@neiu.edu
and Cynthia Gehrie, Ph.D, Video Documentation Fund, Ft. Sheridan Illinois

Abstract

McCosh Even Start, a federally funded after-school project located at McCosh School in an inner-city Chicago neighborhood, is a partnership between Northeastern Illinois University and the Chicago Public Schools. The McCosh Even Start After-School Program consisted of four components: 1) the parent/child component which include after-school family literacy learning center activities (art, science, computer, reading and writing)parent/child field trips, drama tutoring children's program and the use of videotaping and photography to document learning, 2) The adult literacy component which included computer, photography and video classes, 3) parent education component which included a parent club for literacy, career development skills and parent field trips, and 4) a home visiting component.

Students, teachers, parents, administrators and professors participated in action labs to develop their technology, videography, and drama skills. Then began to use these skills with the program.

Computer, video technology, drama-tutoring, photography, art, and science activities were used not only as tools to develop literacy skills, but also as tools to document the literacy progress of parents and children. To evaluate the results of the program, professors, teachers, students, parents, children and a video documenter collaborated to use a wide range of evaluation strategies and to make sure all voices were heard, not just a researcher's voice.

The strategies used to show literacy improvement included video documentation and interviews, parent interest questionnaires, observations, book logs, photo collections with personalized captions, portfolios, informal reading inventories, parent self evaluations, attendance data, parent report surveys on the drama tutoring's effect on children's reading at home, children's drawings and responses to questionnaires.