

Parents

Parent Questionnaire

Children

Howes Peer Play Snapshot Scale

Sociometric rating interview

Classroom

Teacher Questionnaire

Observer Rating of Child Behavior

Wendy Mages *

Project Title:

Does Drama Promote Early Childhood Development? The Effect of Drama on Language, Perspective-taking, and Imagination

Mentor:

Catherine Snow

Project Funding Years:

2005-2007

University Affiliation:

Harvard University

Graduate School of Education

Project Abstract:

This study will use a quasi-experimental multi-site design to investigate the impact of an innovative preschool drama program on urban Head Start children's development of language, perspective-taking, and imagination. This investigation seeks to answer the following research questions: (a) is participation in a high-quality drama program related to enhanced language, perspective-taking, and imagination development of young children enrolled in Head Start? (b) what are the key characteristics of the drama program that may contribute to Head Start children's enhanced language, perspective-taking, and imagination? Participants will include 155 four- and five-year-old children, 72 who participated in the drama program, and 83 who did not participate in the program. Children's language abilities, ability to construct a story, ability to comprehend emotions, and imaginative abilities will be assessed both before the start of the drama program and after it has concluded. It is anticipated that results from the study will support the preschool drama program as an engaging and pleasurable way to prepare Head Start children for school success.

Sample:
155 Head Start children

Measures:
Children
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT- III)
Mages Measure of Story Comprehension (MMSC)
Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation (DELV)
Rabbit-Fox Test
Telephone Task
Assessment of Pretend Action

Teacher
Teacher Survey (based on FACES 2000 Head Start Teacher Interview)

Carola Matera *

Project Title:
Project WRITE! Benefits of Developmental Writing Instruction in Bilingual Head Start Preschool Children

Mentor:
Michael Gerber

Project Funding Years:
2005-2007

University Affiliation:
University of California
Center for Advanced Studies of Individual Differences

Project Abstract:
The University of California will use a randomized experimental design to evaluate an intervention for improving writing development for Head Start preschool children whose first language is Spanish. In addition, they will test the maintenance of learning gains when children begin kindergarten. The study seeks to answer the following research questions: (a) is an instructional intervention designed to facilitate writing development effective for Spanish-speaking children in Head Start? (b) do the effects of the intervention interact with initial levels of vocabulary knowledge? Eighty (N=80) Head Start children will participate in the study. The study will have an alternative treatment control group, who will receive an alternative treatment not related to writing, and a treatment group, who will receive an instructional activity based on targeted instruction and storybook examples. Writing samples will be collected and evaluated. Findings of the study are