



Atlantic Summer
Institute on
Healthy and Safe
Communities

l'Institut d'été
sur les collectivités
sûres et en santé au
Canada atlantique

Posterboard Presentation

Mega-Bites and ABC's: An Examination of the Use of Integrated Technology in an Early Literacy Healthy Eating Kindergarten Program

Presenter

Alaina Roach O'Keefe

Description of Presentation

Major efforts are made to improve the healthy eating habits and literacy levels among young children, most often through intervention-type programs. This research project emerged out of a larger study called Eating Between the Lines: A Healthy Eating Literacy Program for Preschool Children and their Families (EBTL) which used an emergent literacy approach, teaching children about nutrition concepts. Based on the premise of literacy as a social practice and that active learning is most effective in early childhood education, the goal of my research was to include technology as an integral component in the EBTL program. A series of technology-based activities was embedded within the program where children gained experience and new knowledge using slideshows, internet, scanners, drawing, and word processing programs. Questionnaires and interviews with parents probed what evidence existed to demonstrate that knowledge exchange was taking place in the context of the home environment.

Results from observational field data show that students made meaningful connections with each other and with new concepts and ideas. A clear theme that prevailed was the consistent use of oral language and vocabulary development. Children applied new nutrition knowledge while engaging with literacy activities using technology as a literacy tool. Additionally, interviews with parents indicated that there was uptake and meaningful transfer in the home environment with parents, siblings, and peers. Future research may include an EBTL @ Home component, and the



Alaina has recently completed her Master of Applied Health Services Research through the Atlantic Regional Training Centre from the University of Prince Edward Island. She also has her Bachelor of Education (2005) and her Bachelor of Science with Honours in Psychology (2003) from UPEI. She decided to become a teacher so she could make a difference in children's lives in a positive way.

Alaina Roach O'Keefe is both an educator and a junior researcher. She has worked at UPEI for Dr. Vianne Timmons since 2005 in various capacities: as Research Coordinator for Family Literacy in Rural and Aboriginal Communities in Atlantic Canada, and most recently as International Education and Development Project Coordinator. Her research interests lie in the areas of intergenerational literacy, and child and



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potential of extending EBTL into the provincial curriculum.

adolescent health/ nutrition.

How you will benefit

Others will learn:

- about the EBTL program, (literacy, healthy eating emergent curriculum, and technology)
- how technology was successfully integrated into the program, and
- what themes emerged from the parent follow-ups.

Handouts

Mega-bites and ABC's: Examining use of integrated technology in an early literacy healthy eating kindergarten program

Resources

Available during the presentation

Contact Information

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