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Increasing The Disadvantaged Preschool Child's Ability To Follow Oral Directions Through Cooking Experiences

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INCREASING THE DISADVANTAGED PRESCHOOL CHILD'S
ABILITY TO FOLLOW ORAL DIRECTIONS THROUGH COOKING EXPERIENCES

by

ELIZABETH A. KARAS

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of
Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Educational Specialist.

June/1988

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practices. I give the testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

ABSTRACT AND INDEX

Increasing the Disadvantaged Preschool Child's Ability to Follow Oral Directions Through Cooking Experiences.

Karas, Elizabeth A., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University, Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Head Start Curriculum/Head Start Education/Auditory Directions/Teaching Cooking/Parent Participation in Education/Teaching Daily Living Experiences/Preschool Cooking/Preschool Activities/Preschool Education/Preschool Curriculum/Direction Following/Sequencing/Preschool Education for the Disadvantaged/Low Income Education/Education for the Culturally Deprived.

The author developed and implemented a program to increase the preschool disadvantaged child's ability to follow oral directions. The program's aims were to help the child to follow one, two, and three step oral directions given by a teacher which is considered a minimum competency for entrance into the district's kindergarten reading program.

The program contained the following basic components: Pretesting of children to ascertain their score on a prereading readiness subtest called "Following Oral Directions"; inservice for parents to encourage their understanding and home cooperation; implementation of cooking activities in the classroom; participation of parents in similar home activities; post testing of children on the same subtest to determine progress; and surveying of parent participation and teacher opinion in the educational objectives. The effectiveness of the program was determined by the readiness level attainment of all children on the post test, on the amount of home participation, and on the opinion of the teacher and parent as to the effectiveness of the activities in reaching educational objectives. (Appendices include pre and post test results, cooking activities, a parent workshop invitation and agenda, a parent survey, and results of the parent survey.)

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

The problem to be addressed occurs in an urban Head Start center site. The center serves one hundred forty four-year-old children whose parents or guardians are below the poverty level index as established by the federal Office of Management and Budget. In addition, approximately ten percent of the children served are designated as handicapped as defined by Head Start guidelines.

The target population for this Head Start program was initially determined through a community needs assessment which found the highest concentration of poverty in the county to be in the community in which the center site was then situated. In addition, other severe community problems such as sub-standard housing, high crime, inadequate street drainage and scarcity of ameliorating services helped to make this community a "neighborhood strategy area" according to the local regional planning council.

Subsequent assessments of the population served by Head Start profile the typical family structure as being single-parent with the mother acting as head-of-household. Only 19 percent of the mothers work full-time. Over 60 percent of the families are receiving Medicaid, and many also receive Food Stamps and the benefits from the Women, Infant and Children Supplemental Food Program. Multiple children share the incoming family resources. Ninety percent of the families served at this site are Black while the remaining ten percent are Hispanic and Caucasian.

The four-year-old children served by Head Start may be termed "disadvantaged" because of the above economic, cultural and racial factors. They

share a common environment with other disadvantaged children. The following are components of this environment:

- "1. A low annual income level.
2. An underutilization of available community resources.
3. A rate of unemployment considered to be high within the residing community, with minimum living and sanitary conditions.
4. Large families with inadequate room and living space and an overwhelming lack of privacy.
5. Inadequate education and inability to search out educational opportunities.
6. Excessive reliance on welfare and governmental programs.
7. A pervasive attitude of hopelessness and a feeling that there is little chance of change." (Bender and Bender, 1979, p. 11)

Some specific characteristics of the disadvantaged child himself are as follows (Miller, 1967):

-he quite often comes from a broken home;
-he is non-verbal and concrete-minded;
-he is often hungry;
-his color handicaps him and provides him with a negative self-image;
-he is physically less healthy than his middle-class peers;
-he is handicapped in the expression and comprehension of language;
-he tends to be extroverted rather than introverted.

The enrolled children are divided into classes of twenty with a teacher, aide, and Foster Grandparent monitoring each class. Support personnel include

a social worker, an education coordinator and a program secretary. Part-time assistance is provided by a speech therapist, school nurse, and school psychologist.

As the director of the Head Start program, this writer is responsible for the administration and supervision of all program operations and personnel. The director writes the yearly federal grant, maintains appropriate procedures for monitoring budget expenditures, oversees the various components for compliance with federal program performance standards, evaluates all Head Start personnel, and works closely with both the Head Start Policy Council, composed of current parents and community members, and with the grantee hierarchy, in this case district-wide, school administrators and school board members.

Many Head Start children are deficient in receptive language skills, specifically the skill of following oral directions. When a "Following Oral Directions" subtest was given to all students in a specific Head Start class, nine out of twenty tested children did not reach the readiness score of 10 out of a possible score of 12. (See Appendix A.) This indicates that there is a lack of comprehension in this skill area.

According to Bereiter and Engelmann (1966), studies of three-to-five-year old disadvantaged children have shown them to be retarded or below average in every intellectual ability. In overall school-related learning, the disadvantaged preschool child tends to be three to nine months behind the average child; but in language development the disadvantaged preschooler tends to be at least a year behind.

The literature further states that a disadvantaged child masters language that will meet his personal and social needs; but he does not know how to use language to obtain or transmit information to monitor his own behavior, or to

carry on verbal reasoning. In other words, "...he fails to master the cognitive uses of language, which are the uses that are of primary importance in school." (Bereiter, 1966, p. 42)

According to Bereiter and Ergelmann (1966) the speech of the severely deprived child consists of "giant words". Whole phrases and small sentences cannot be taken apart by the child and recombined into "on the chair or table". The deprived child has great difficulty in dealing with sentences as sequences of meaningful parts. This "giant word" syndrome helps to explain why deprived children have difficulty in learning to read. Children who have difficulty in separating words as unitary items in spoken language will also have difficulty in decoding clusters of printed characters into spoken words. Instructional words such as "on, under, in, etc.", are in particular risk of being lost or never learned because of this syndrome; the ability to follow oral directions also suffers.

The Carolina Developmental Screening Devise, administered to the Head Start children upon enrollment, indicates that they are generally a year below the expected developmental level in receptive and expressive language as is consistent with the characteristics of disadvantaged children. The Carolina Curriculum attempts to remediate this deficiency, and many of the children do make progress, as measured by the reissuance of the Carolina at the end of the school year. However, recent feedback from kindergarten teachers have indicated that the gains are not sufficient to permit their instructional objectives in language arts to be met without continued remediation.

Within the last three years, the school district into which this Head Start feeds has instituted the Houghton Mifflin Getting Ready to Read pre-reading program in its kindergarten.

The Ready Steps Program preceeds Getting Ready to Read. The first component of Ready Steps is the Ready Steps test, which assesses a child's

prerequisite reading readiness skills that must be present for that child to be successful in a formal pre-reading program such as Getting Ready to Read. The Ready Steps test is an individually administered battery of tests measuring the following skill areas:

1. Auditory Discrimination
2. Instructional Language
3. Following Oral Directions
4. Listening Comprehension
5. Sequencing
6. Oral Language Development
7. General Vocabulary
8. Categorizing
9. Using Oral Context
10. Letter Form Discrimination

According to Ready Steps Hillerich and Johnson, 1983, success in any prereading program is dependent upon a child's ability to follow a teacher's directions. This is commonly considered to be an essential minimum competency. An example may be, "Put a line under the letter I am pointing to". A child must be able to separate these words into meaningful items, and to accurately accomplish the task. If the child cannot successfully pass the "Following Oral Directions" subtest of Ready Steps, it indicates that he is not able to go on to the prereading program until remediation has taken place.

It becomes clear, then, that one of the first hurdles which must be passed to get to the prereading program is to pass the subtest measuring an ability to follow oral directions, and it is important that this ability be mastered in Head start. Therefore, the first objective of the proposal was as follows:

Objective #1: All twenty children in Class C will have reached the readiness score of 10 on the Peady Steps subtest "Following Oral Directions" when this is administered 10 weeks after the implementation of the problem solution.

According to William J. Bennet, Secretary of the United States Department of Education, in the publication What Works, Research About Teaching and Learning (1986, p. 4), "Parents are the child's first and most influential teachers. If parents are not effective teachers, then in most cases the school will have far greater difficulty being effective".

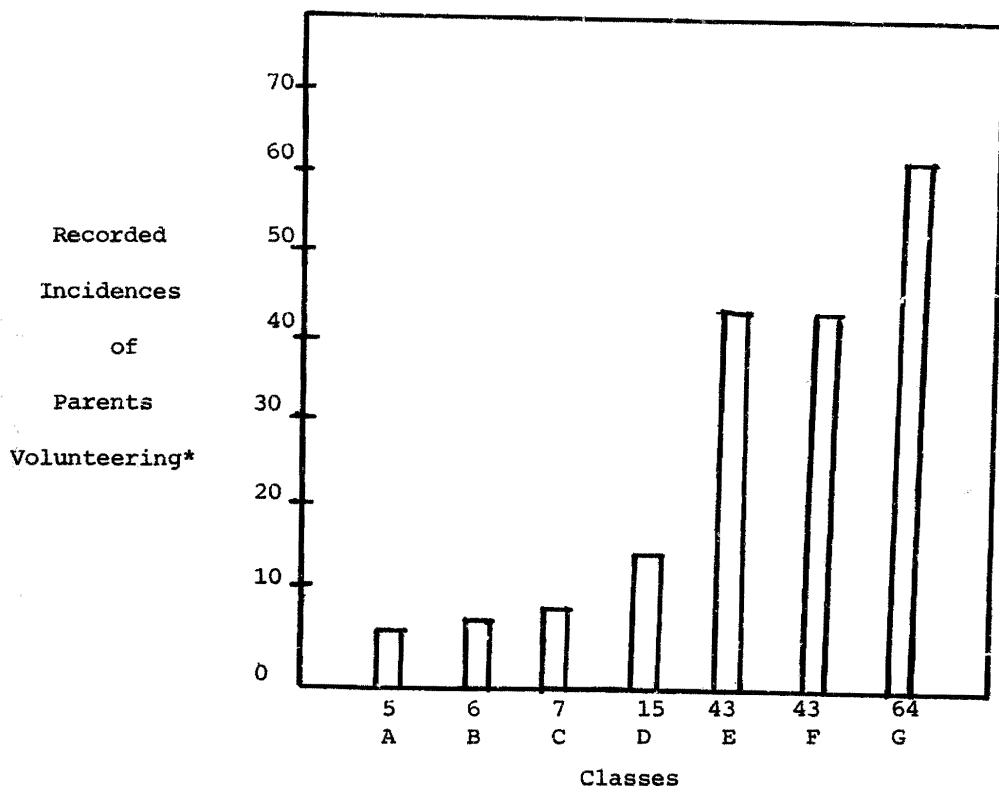
This has long been the philosophy of Head Start. A "parent involvement" component is a mandatory part of every local Head Start program plan. Since Head Start children come from disadvantaged homes with the attendant problems previously described, involving parents in program activities is always a challenge. Lack of self-esteem and the excessive amount of time required to attend to basic needs, are inhibiting factors. Better parent participation in program activities or in home activities relating to school would increase the disadvantaged child's chance at accomplishing educational objectives.

In particular, the parents' assistance in teaching their children to follow oral directions, ie., reinforcing this skill at home as it is presented in Head Start, could be of great benefit to the child in the internalizing of the skill. In addition, a closer relationship between parent and child, and the beginning of a parent's investment in the educational future of her child might be residual benefits of parent participation.

In general, the number of parents who are involved in school activities varies widely from class to class due to factors such as instructor personality and parent work schedules. For instance, this year according to office sign in sheets, Class C had only seven incidences of parents volunteering from

December 1 through February 29, while Class G had had as many as sixty-four. The classroom average of numbers of incidences of parent participation is twenty-six. (See graph below.)

PARENT VOLUNTEER GRAPH



*"Volunteering" refers both to attendance at parent involvement meetings and participation in classroom activities. The time span covered is December 1 through February 29.

Parent participation in learning activities which were sent home by all instructors is much harder to gauge since no return response from the parent was usually expected.

Because the parents in Class C appeared to be infrequently involved in their children's educational experience, it was desirable that they should become more involved in order to assist their children to accomplish the educational objective of following oral directions. Involvement would be measured in these ways:

Objective #2: Ten out of twenty parents will have attended the initial inservice describing the educational problem, solution, and the parents' expected participation. This will be noted by looking at the sign in sheet.

Objective #3: Ten out of twenty parents will have responded by return notice at the end of the ten week period indicating they had conducted at least three learning experiences at home.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH

Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) have developed a complex specific language program to help disadvantaged children to acquire skills they consider necessary for school success. The language program relies on direct instruction using the teaching method of "pattern drill" such as may be used in the teaching of foreign languages.

Bender and Bender (1979) are more developmentally oriented and, therefore, more in synchronization with Head Start philosophy. They suggest various classroom activities to be able to follow oral directions. Some of these activities are:

Playing a memory game giving children three or four things to do.

Doing art projects that require two or more steps.

Giving two-, three-, and four-part commands during gross motor activities.

Playing "Simon Says" using sequentially more difficult commands.

Singing "follow the directions" songs such as "Put Your Finger in the Air".

Preparing recipes that require more than one step and having children follow the directions.

(Bender and Bender, 1979, p. 121)

Bereiter and Engelmann have serious doubts about the developmental approach to preschool education such as that espoused by Head Start. They contend that an academically-oriented preschool is in the best interest of the disadvantaged child.

Many excellent materials are currently available to assist programs in implementing language objectives for children. The Peabody Language Development Kits are the most widely used programs with Head Start children in our nation. All the materials, including puppets and a group of characters, posters, songs, stories, recordings, and artwork, help children to improve their ability to express their thoughts and feelings, to think and reason.

The Carolina Developmental Curriculum, which this Head Start uses, also addresses expressive and receptive language and provides a variety of activity suggestions which will build upon skills already present to up-grade levels of ability.

These and many other commercial language instructional materials address the following oral directions skill in a fragmented manner. One may find activities such as painting or sorting to learn color in the cognitive domain heading, or activities such as touching a poster picture correctly to learn a preposition under the receptive language heading.

The Ready Steps program itself provides remedial activities under the heading "Following Oral Instructions Follow-up". These activities range from the concrete to the abstract, elements of a good language arts program. However, it is not Head Start's intention to use the same curriculum as that of the kindergarten. If the kindergarten teacher chooses to reinforce the following oral direction skill the year after Head Start, those teachers should be assured that the Ready Steps Follow-Up Activities are novel and, therefore, interesting to all class members.

It was this writer's intention, however, to focus upon the subject of following oral directions existing in itself just as is done by the Ready Steps Follow-Up Activities. Following oral directions could be taught through the use of posters, individual manipulatives, art, physical

demonstration, games, etc. These are all valid inexpensive instructional methods but are widely used to teach other necessary preschool concepts. On the other hand, a unique approach to teaching the ability to follow oral directions might be to use simple cooking experiences as suggested by Bender and Bender (1979).

Cooking activities are often cited in a variety of professional preschool literature as vehicles to stimulate expressive language and encourage receptive language. The following are good reasons why cooking activities could be used to solve the problem of the lack of ability to follow oral directions:

1. Children equate food with love.
2. Cooking is intrinsically exciting.
3. Children love to do things they see adults doing.
4. Cooking offers an opportunity to do something "real".
5. Cooking provides a way for youngsters to feel important.
6. Cooking gives children a sense of accomplishment.
7. Cooking is a sensory experience and young children learn best when their senses are involved.
8. Cooking uses concrete materials and children can manipulate them.
9. Cooking "fits in" with the Head Start nutrition component where children are encouraged to learn about foods and develop good eating habits.
10. Children learn to use proper tools to accomplish a task.
11. Turn-taking is fostered as is cooperative play.
12. Auxiliary concepts in science, mathematics and language may be learned besides an intended concept.

13. Parents are more likely to participate in a cooking-related learning activity at home with their child because cooking is familiar and rewarding to them.
14. Costs for simple cooking can be minimal.
15. Cooking stimulates expressive and receptive language.
16. Children learn step-by-step directions.

It was felt then that learning the skill of following oral directions through cooking activities would be a stimulating means to acquire this basic ability.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This writer wanted to improve the receptive language skill of following oral directions through participatory cooking experiences in the classroom and through encouraging parents to similarly work with their children at home.

The strategy of using simple cooking experiences to teach Head Start four-year-olds how to follow oral directions was chosen for four major reasons:

1. The children are in what Piaget calls the "pre-operational" stage of cognitive development. Children learn best at this stage by having first-hand experience. They must touch, taste, smell and do in order to learn. Material is best learned if it is simple and in sequence (Turlington, 1981). Cooking experiences fit these criteria.
2. Cooking activities are often cited in professional preschool literature as vehicles to stimulate expressive language and encourage receptive language. Following oral direction, therefore, should be a category of language development which would benefit from the use of cooking experiences.
3. Nutrition is a major Head Start health component. The foods children eat affect their growth, development, ability to learn and general behavior. Early experiences with food may lay the foundation for life-long eating habits (Goodwin and Pollen, 1974). Head Start encourages the local curriculum to include the active encouragement of children's interest in food and their involvement in its preparation. In addition, because nutrition experiences are a required part

of each Head Start's curriculum, needed food and tool materials are "allowable cost" items in the budget. Monies had already been identified as available.

4. Head Start regulations require parent education in nutrition and participation in the achievement of educational objectives for their children. Simple cooking wxperiences carried out in the home with explicit educational objectives are less threatening and more intrinsically rewarding than other unfamiliar teaching kinds of activities. The likelihood of parent participation in the reinforcement of the concept of following oral directions was, therefore, greater.

This schedule was followed to implement the plan to improve children's ability to follow oral directions:

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	Weeks									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
This writer developed all (6 classroom, 6 home) of the cooking experiences.	△									
This writer shared cooking experiences and expectations with the teacher.		△								
This writer and the teacher held a workshop for parents.			△							
This writer purchased ingredients for the cooking experiences.				△	△	△	△	△	△	
The teacher conducted cooking experiences once a week in her classroom for all children in small groups.				△	△	△	△	△	△	
The teacher sent home writer-made cooking experiences which could be made at home.				△	△	△	△	△	△	
This writer monitored activities and conferred with teacher concerning mid-course changes.					△		△			
The teacher sent home writer-developed parent surveys.										△
This writer collected parent surveys and compiled answers.										△
Children were retested by this writer.										△

Simple cooking activities designed to stress the following of one, two, and three step directions were developed by this writer during the first week of implementation. (See Appendix B.) The cooking activities began with one step directions and gradually became more difficult with the recipes containing a maximum of three step directions. The recipes were either made up by this writer or were a compilation of recipes found in a variety of cook-books. The activities were typewritten and divided into four major sections.

The first section, repeated verbatim on all activities, was a note to parents from the teacher and this writer saying:

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,

The teacher and this writer

The second section was the classroom cooking activity. The activity was named, the number of students to plan for (20) was given, needed utensils and ingredients were listed, general directions designed to help the teacher to set up the activity were described, and the exact words to be spoken by the teacher were written.

Preceding each recipe direction to the children, the teacher was required to be sure of the children's attention by saying, "Listen". This was similar to the structure of the Ready Steps subtest "Following Oral Directions" procedure.

The third section of the written cooking activity gave a parent/child recipe similar to the one done in the classroom, but slightly more difficult. The activity was designed to use ingredients that the parent was likely to

have on hand or that were easily obtainable. Again the utensils and ingredients were listed, and general directions for the preparation of the activities were spelled out. What the mother was to say was also given, again preceeded by the word, "Listen".

The fourth section of the cooking activity was a tear-off portion to be completed by parents and sent back to the school indicating whether or not a cooking activity had taken place at home. The section assured parents that the return of the paper would secure a reward for the child whether or not the activity had been done at home.

The project purpose and written cooking activities were shared with the classroom teacher who reviewed them thoroughly during the second week of implementation. It was the teacher's opinion that the cooking activities could take place as a center during the "free play" period of the class schedule. The children could thus be divided into groups of four or five making the activity more intimate and workable. The classroom assistant and volunteer foster grandparent could help by monitoring the other centers. The teacher projected that all of the children would have a turn to participate during the same free play period.

In the third week of implementation, parents were invited to attend a workshop given by the teacher and this writer in order to describe the intent of the project to them and to familiarize them with the cooking activities. Door prizes were promised and parents were assured that they could eat what they made during the workshop. (See Appendix C.)

An agenda for the workshop was designed to include initial refreshments during the sign in period, a warm up activity, a rationale or explanation of the project, actual cooking experiences, and a description of how parents could help. Also built in to the agenda was a time for questions, and for the distributions of the door prizes. (See Appendix D.)

During the ensuing six weeks this writer purchased the ingredients needed for the recipies. The activities were then conducted in the classroom by the teacher in the manner described above. The typewritten activities were sent home after the experiances had occurred, and the children were rewarded for returned responses with little goodies chosen at random from a box used in the classroom to encourage appropriate behavior.

Also during this period, the writer monitored the activities and discussed their progress with the teacher. In general, it was felt that no major revisions needed to be made, but some suggestions by the teacher were as follows:

1. Three recipies needed minor revisions as noted in Appendix B.
2. The cooking activities needed to be conducted mid-week to ensure the return of the responses during that week.

At the end of the six week period this writer sent parent surveys home with the children who were rewarded for their return. The responses were compiled (see Appendix F) and the children were retested with the Ready Steps subtest, "Following Oral Directions". (See Appendix A.)

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

All children in Class C made the readiness level (score 10) on the Ready Steps "Following Oral Directions" post test. The nine children who had not been at the readiness level when the pretest was administered all improved by two or more points. (See Appendix A.)

The most significant improvement of eight points going from "not ready" at five points to "completely ready" at twelve points was found in a Hispanic child who had previously spoken only Spanish until her entrance in Head Start. It can be assumed that this child's English improved so rapidly in the Head Start setting that she could, with the help of the cooking activities, be completely successful on the post test.

The only child who showed no improvement at all (although she had made a readiness score of 10 during the pretest), other than the five children who had topped the scale on the pretest, was one who had been recommended for psychological referral because of her inability to make progress over the year in any developmental area.

All other children made some improvement on the post test and therefore could be considered to have mastered the basic skill of following oral directions.

The teacher reported that the cooking activities were very popular. The children enthusiastically took their turns when the cooking center was part of their free play schedule. They quickly became accustomed to pausing at the word "listen" when directions were being given so that they could hear what their actions should be next. The teacher felt that there was skill "spill-over" in that the children appeared to listen better and follow oral directions more accurately during other times of the day. The most fun, reported the teacher, was when the children got to eat their own creations.

The teacher has saved the cooking activities to include in her lesson plans for next year.

This writer believes, because of the above data, that using cooking experiences in the classroom improves young children's ability to follow oral directions. (Objective #1: Successful.)

Only one parent attended the workshop designed to familiarize the parents with the project. This was in spite of sufficient notice, having the invitation issued two days in succession, and the inducements of door prizes and refreshments. The teacher was not surprised at this turnout since, of all the Head Start classes, hers had the highest percentage of working parents (60%) this year. The parent that did come had personalized attention since the entire workshop was conducted for her benefit. She won the door prize as well. This parent indicated pleasure at finding out that she could help her child to improve an academic skill in such a simple and enjoyable manner.

While the parent workshop could not be considered a successful indicator of improvement in parent involvement, it did have the residual benefit of giving the teacher the opportunity to physically run through some of the activities before conducting them in class.

A survey of parents' work schedules might have revealed a more appropriate time to hold a workshop than mid-morning. This should have been done before the workshop portion of the project was implemented. (Objective #2: Not successful.)

Forty-six cooking activity response forms were returned by the children. Of these, twenty-seven indicated that the parent had conducted a "follow the directions" cooking activity at home. This shows almost four times the parent involvement in six weeks than was documented in the three previous months. Even the nineteen responses indicating that the parent had not done a cooking

activity with the child showed some contact with the school and care for the child by returning the form.

Nine parents returned the final Parent Survey. (See Appendix E.) The average number of activities these parents had done with their children was three. If you add an additional three parents who conducted three or more activities at home as shown by the weekly returned cooking responses, the criteria for success in this objective has been met.

The responses on the Parent Survey were nearly all positive. Only one response was negative, Question 5 reading, "In doing the activities I believe I was doing something: ___ worthwhile, or, ___ useless," the word "useless" was checked. This writer suspects that that may have been an error since question 9, of a similar nature, was checked positively.

All of the parents felt that the activities were fun for both the parent and child, and that they were easy to do. Eight of the nine believed they were doing something worthwhile for their child (see above), while all thought that the activities brought them closer to their child. Finally, all thought that the cooking activities improved their child's ability to follow spoken directions.

With the above data in mind, this writer believes that parent involvement had been improved as indicated by both the amount of parents participating at home in the activities, and by the positive results of the parent surveys.
(Objective #3: Successful.)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Part of the *raison d'être* for Head Start and other preschool programs is to enhance children's readiness for the more academic skills of elementary school. Since following oral directions is a prerequisite skill to reading, preschool programs should be addressing the fundamentals of this skill in a developmentally appropriate manner.

This writer believes that cooking activities improve children's ability to follow oral directions. The post test outcomes of the project described support this belief. This writer also believes that the project improved parent participation, a desirable element in the education of children.

Therefore, it is important to share the information resulting from the project with other programs that serve similar populations whether those similarities lie in age group served, or type of population.

An in-house workshop with the other Head Start teachers and assistants who are part of the local program would be the first step in disseminating the information. A parent workshop, held at an appropriate time, would also be informative if the teachers chose to use the activities to enhance acquisition of the skill.

Because several Migrant Early Childhood classes share the Head Start campus, the teachers, assistants, and parents of this program would be invited to attend the above workshops.

Title XX Child Care personnel will be contacted in the area and the project information shared with them. This group serves a similar population. The writer's availability as a workshop speaker will be made known.

Local professional organizations such as the Lee County Association for Children Under Six (LACUS) often are forums for sharing items of professional interest. This writer has conducted workshops for LACUS in the past and would gladly do so again if the membership so desired.

Head Start has had open houses for kindergarten teachers and Prep specialists in previous years. Cooking in the classroom would be shared with these groups as a means of enhancing reading readiness should the open houses again be held as a way of articulating with these groups.

State Head Start training conferences are held at least tri-yearly. Sharing of "best-practices" is encouraged and gives local programs an opportunity to describe unique projects which may be taking place in their counties. This may also be a forum to share the project information gathered in this practicum.

In addition, cooking experiences will be examined by this writer as a possible vehicle for other cognitive objectives, particularly as they relate to language, which is such a deficit in the disadvantaged children served by this Head Start program, but also as they relate to other areas such as nutrition, science and health. This writer would encourage other educators to do the same.

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APPENDIX A

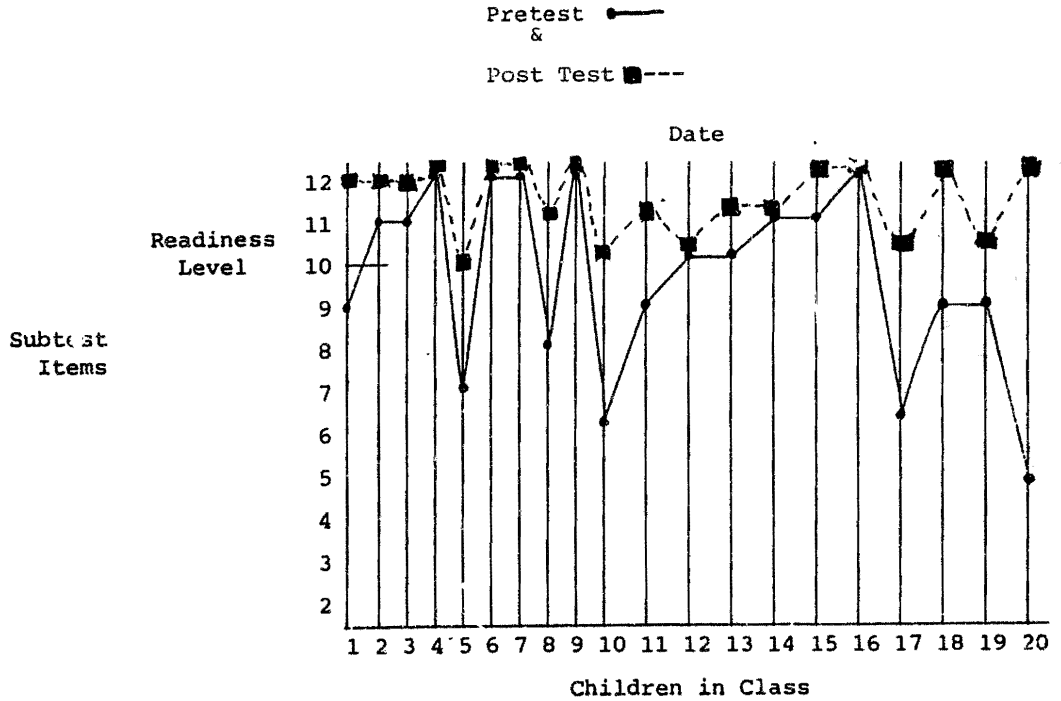
READY STEPS

FOLLOWING ORAL DIRECTIONS SUBTEST RESULTS

PRETEST
AND
POST TEST

READY STEPS

FOLLOWING ORAL DIRECTIONS



APPENDIX B

COOKING ACTIVITIES

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosa and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity

EGG BOATS

(for 20)

Utensils: 20 plastic knives
20 spoons
20^{*} small containers
20 large paper plates

Ingredients: 20 peeled hardboiled eggs
1 jar of mayonnaise

General Directions: Teacher will work with small groups, giving each child an egg, a knife, a spoon, a small container^{*r} and a plate.

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...cut the egg on the plate.
2. Listen...scoop out the yolk and put it in the container.
3. Listen...add 2 teaspoons of mayonnaise and mix.
4. Listen...fill the eggs.
5. Listen...eat the eggs.

Changes:

- *40 small containers instead of 20
- **2 small containers with one containing some mayonnaise instead of a small container

Parent/Child Activity

EGGS 'N BREAD

Utensils: 2 table knives
2 small bowls
2 large plates

Ingredients: 4 hardcooked eggs
1/4 cup mayonnaise
4 slices of bread

General Directions: Mother and child each get two eggs, one bowl, one knife and one plate.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...peel the eggs.
2. Listen...chop the eggs and put in the bowl.
3. Listen...add several tablespoons of mayonnaise and mix.
4. Listen...spread the mixture on a bread slice and cover with the other bread slice.
5. Listen...cut the sandwich in half and eat.

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

Parent's Name

Child's Name

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosa and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity
(for 20)

SMILING CRACKERS

Utensils: 20* small containers
20 plastic knives
20 small plates

Ingredients: Box of Saltines
Large jar of peanut butter
Medium box of raisins
Can of peanuts

General Directions: Teacher will work with small groups giving each child a container of mixed raisins and peanuts, a plastic knife and a small plate. Stir the jar of peanut butter for easy spreading. **

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...spread the peanut butter on the crackers.
2. Listen...put raisins for eyes and a peanut for the nose.
3. Listen...put raisins for the mouth and look at your cracker faces.
4. Listen...eat the crackers.

Changes:

- * 40 small containers instead of 20
- ** Add a small container of peanut butter for each child

Parent/Child Activity

SMILING SANDWICH

Utensils: 2 dinner knives
2 large plates

Ingredients: 2 slices of bread
Jar of peanut butter
Raisins
Peanuts
2 lettuce leaves
Banana

General Directions: Mother can give a knife and plate to herself and her child. She can also distribute some raisins, peanuts, a lettuce leaf, and a quarter of a banana.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...spread the peanut butter on the bread.
2. Listen...put raisins for eyes and a peanut for a nose.
3. Listen...put a banana for the mouth and lettuce for the hair.
4. Listen...look at the face you made and then eat it.

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

Parent's Name

Child's Name

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Rosà and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity

APPLE BUBBLE DRINK (for 20)

Utensils: 20 plastic spoons
40 small containers
20 clear plastic cups

Ingredients: One large can of apple juice
One large bottle of carbonated water (soda water)

General Directions: Teacher will work with small groups, giving each child a spoon, a cup, and a small container of apple juice and a small container of carbonated water.

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...taste the apple juice.
2. Listen...taste the carbonated water.
3. Listen...pour the apple juice into the cup.
4. Listen...pour the carbonated water into the cup.
5. Listen...mix this with the spoon.
6. Listen...drink the mixture and enjoy.

Parent/Child Activity

APPLE CRANBERRY BUBBLE DRINK ON ICE

Utensils: 6 small cups
2 tall glasses
2 spoons
2 straws (optional)

Ingredients: Apple juice--enough for 1 person
Cranberry juice --enough for 1 person
Carbonated water--1 small bottle
Ice

General Directions: Pour the apple juice, cranberry juice, and carbonated water into 2 small cups each. Mother gets one container of each liquid as does the child. Each person also gets a glass and a spoon.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...taste the apple juice.
2. Listen...taste the cranberry juice.
3. Listen...taste the carbonated water.
4. Listen...pour the apple juice into the glass.
5. Listen...pour the cranberry juice into the glass.
6. Listen...pour the carbonated water into the glass.
7. Listen...stir the mixture.
8. Listen...gently drop the ice in.
9. Listen...put in straw.(Optional)
10. Listen...drink it and enjoy.

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

Parent's Name

Child's Name

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Ros^a and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity

CINNAMON BREAD (for 20)

Utensils: 20 plastic spoons
20 plastic knives
40 small containers
20 large paper plates

Ingredients: A large loaf of wheat bread
A jar of honey
A container of cinnamon

General Directions: Teacher will work with small groups, giving child a spoon, a knife, a paper plate, a slice of bread, and a container each of cinnamon and honey.

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...pour the cinnamon into the honey and mix with your spoon.
2. Listen...spread the honey on your bread with your knife.
3. Listen...eat your cinnamon bread.

Parent/Child Activity

CINNAMON TOAST SANDWICHES

Utensils: A toaster
2 spoons
2 spreading knives
2 plates
4 small containers

Ingredients: 4 slices of whole grain bread
Small jar of honey
1 teaspoon of cinnamon

General Directions: Mother and child each get a spoon, knife, plate, two slices of bread, and two small containers each holding some honey and some cinnamon. Mother and child both toast 1 slice of bread each time.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...toast one piece of bread.
2. Listen...toast your other piece of bread.
3. Listen...pour the cinnamon into the honey and mix with your spoon.
4. Listen...spread the honey on one piece of toast with your knife.
5. Listen...cover that toast with the other piece of toast and cut in half with your knife.
6. Listen...eat your delicious cinnamon toast sandwich.

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

Parent's Name

Child's Name

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosa and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity

(for 0)

SWEET STUFFED CELERY*

(for 20)

Utensils: 20 plastic spoons
20 plastic knives
20 small containers
20 large paper plates

Ingredients: Quart of cottage cheese
Large can of peach sections
2 bunches of celery, cleaned and cut in 2 or 3 sections.

General Directions: Teacher will work with small groups, giving each child a knife, a spoon, a container of cottage cheese, and a paper plate with two peach sections on it.

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...with your knife, cut the peaches on your plate into little pieces and put them into the cottage cheese, and mix them together with your spoon.
2. Listen...with your spoon, put the cottage cheese mixture into the celery sections and eat them.

Changes:

*Celery was not popular with the children, therefore some other vegetable needs to be considered as a substitute.

Parent/Child Activity

ANTS ON A LOG

Utensils: 2 spoons
2 knives
2 plates
2 small containers

Ingredients: Peanut butter
2 large stalks of celery cleaned and cut in half
Raisins

General Directions: Mother and child will each have a spoon, a knife, a container with some peanut butter, and a plate with 2 small stalks of celery and a bunch of raisins on it.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...put some raisins in the peanut butter and mix it up with your spoon.
2. Listen...with your knife, spread the peanut butter mixture into the celery stalks and put more raisins on top of the peanut butter.
3. Listen...eat your ants on a log!

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

Parent's Name

36

Child's Name

Dear Parents:

Our class is learning how to follow oral directions. Today we did the following cooking activity to help with this task. Please help your child by either doing the activity again using ingredients enough for only two, or by doing the expanded parent/child activity found attached to this sheet. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Rosa and Mrs. Karas

Classroom Activity

PEANUT BUTTER DELIGHT (for 20)

Utensils: 20 plastic knives
20 large paper plates
20 small containers

Ingredients: 2 bunches of bananas
Jar of peanut butter
Loaf of whole wheat bread

General Directions: Teacher will work in small groups giving each child $\frac{1}{2}$ a peeled banana, a slice of bread on a paper plate, and a small container of peanut butter.

Teacher Will Say:

1. Listen...cut your slice of bread in half with your knife, and spread one half with your peanut butter.
2. Listen...slice your banana into small circles, put the circles on the peanut butter, and put the other piece of bread on top.
3. Listen...eat and enjoy!

AUTUMN SANDWICH

Utensils: 2 plates
2 knives
6 small containers

Ingredients: 4 slices of whole wheat bread
2 small or 1 large apple, washed and thinly sliced
Peanut butter
Honey

General Directions: Mother and child will each have a knife, a plate with 2 slices of bread on it, and 3 containers holding apple slices, peanut butter, and honey.

Mother Says:

1. Listen...with your knife, spread the peanut butter on one slice of bread, and the honey on another slice of bread.
2. Listen...put the apple slices on top of the honey and carefully cover with the peanut butter bread.
3. Listen...with your knife, cut the sandwich in half and eat it.

PLEASE TEAR HERE AND SEND THIS BACK TO MRS. ROSA.
YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A REWARD FOR RETURNING THIS TO SCHOOL.

_____ Yes, my child and I did a cooking activity at home.

_____ No, my child and I did not do a cooking activity at home.

APPENDIX C

PARENT INVITATION TO WORKSHOP

Dear Parent,

Your child will be participating in cooking experiences in his class to help increase his ability to follow spoken directions, an important prereading skill.

You are invited to attend a workshop being given to familiarize you with the simple activities and with how you can help your child at home.

The workshop will be held on _____, _____
in the Head Start Parent Room.

Please COME!

DOOR PRIZES! EAT WHAT YOU MAKE!

See you there.

Sincerely,

Head Start Program Coordinator

APPENDIX D

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Parent Workshop

Agenda

10am - 11:30am

Sign In and Coffee 10-10:15

Warm-Up Activity 10:15-10:20

Rationale 10:20-10:30

Oral Direction Following is Important
Parents are Important
Why We Use Cooking to Learn to Follow Directions

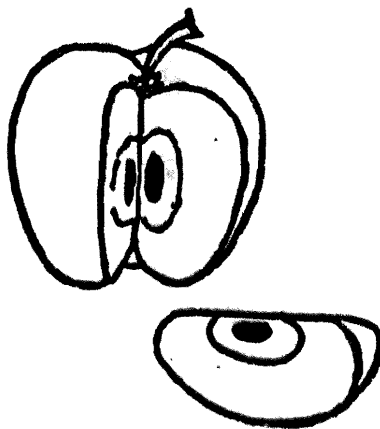
Cooking Experiences 10:30-11

Apple Bubble Drink
Egg Boats
Smiling Crackers

How Parents Can Help 11-11:10

Questions 11:10-11:25

Door Prize 11:20-11:30



APPENDIX E

PARENT SURVEY .

Dear Parent,

Your child has been participating in simple cooking experiences in class which were designed to increase his ability to follow spoken directions.

Cooking activities were also sent home so that you, too, could help your child in this endeavor.

Please assist us to determine if the activities were useful by filling out the attached questionnaire and returning this paper to school as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Karas

Head Start Program Coordinator

HOME COOKING EXPERIENCE

PARENT SURVEY

1. Of six activities sent home, my child and I did this many: 6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
2. Most of the activities were: easy to do _____
hard to do _____
3. For me, the activities were: fun _____
boring _____
4. For my child, the activities were: fun _____
boring _____
5. In doing the activities I believe I was doing something: worthwhile _____
useless _____
6. After doing each activity I felt: closer to my child _____
no closer to my child _____
7. I could see improvement in my child's ability to follow spoken directions after this number of activities: 1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
8. I could see no improvement in my child's ability to follow spoken directions: _____ (no improvement)
9. Even though I did not participate in home cooking experiences, I believe the classroom cooking experiences are helpful to teach children to follow spoken directions: yes _____
no _____

Child's Name

Parent's Name

Comments: (negative or positive) _____

APPENDIX F
RESULTS OF PARENT SURVEY

HOME COOKING EXPERIENCE

PARENT SURVEY

RESULTS

1. Of six activities sent home, my child and I did this many:

6	
5	2
4	4
3	1
2	1
1	1
0	

2. Most of the activities were: easy to do 9
hard to do

3. For me, the activities were: fun 9
boring

4. For my child, the activities were: fun 9
boring

5. In doing the activities I believe I was doing something: worthwhile 8
useless 1

6. After doing each activity I felt: closer to my child 9
no closer to my child

7. I could see improvement in my child's ability to follow spoken directions after this number of activities:

1	1
2	
3	4
4	1
5	2
6	

8. I could see no improvement in my child's ability to follow spoken directions: 0 (no improvement)

9. Even though I did not participate in home cooking experiences, I believe the classroom cooking experiences are helpful to teach children to follow spoken directions: yes 9
no

Child's Name	Parent's Name
Comments: (negative or positive)	

APPENDIX G

DISSEMINATION PACKAGE

1. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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2. ABSTRACT REPORT

ABSTRACT AND INDEX

Increasing the Disadvantaged Preschool Child's Ability to Follow Oral Directions Through Cooking Experiences.

Karas, Elizabeth A., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University, Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Head Start Curriculum/Head Start Education/Auditory Directions/Teaching Cooking/Parent Participation in Education/Teaching Daily Living Experiences/Preschool Cooking/Preschool Activities/Preschool Education/Preschool Curriculum/Direction Following/Sequencing/Preschool Education for the Disadvantaged/Low Income Education/Education for the Culturally Deprived.

The author developed and implemented a program to increase the preschool disadvantaged child's ability to follow oral directions. The program's aims were to help the child to follow one, two, and three step oral directions given by a teacher which is considered a minimum competency for entrance into the district's kindergarten reading program.

The program contained the following basic components: Pretesting of children to ascertain their score on a prereading readiness subtest called "Following Oral Directions"; inservice for parents to encourage their understanding and home cooperation; implementation of cooking activities in the classroom; participation of parents in similar home activities; post testing of children on the same subtest to determine progress; and surveying of parent participation and teacher opinion in the educational objectives. The effectiveness of the program was determined by the readiness level attainment of all children on the post test, on the amount of home participation, and on the opinion of the teacher and parent as to the effectiveness of the activities in reaching educational objectives. (Appendices include pre and post test results, cooking activities, a parent workshop invitation and agenda, a parent survey, and results of the parent survey.)

3. LETTER TO ALUMNI

Dear Alumni,

Recently I developed and implemented a program to increase the preschool disadvantaged child's ability to follow oral directions. The program's aims were to help the child to follow one, two and three step oral directions given by a teacher which is considered a minimum competency for entrance into the district's kindergarten prereading program.

Head Start children were pretested to ascertain their score on a follow oral directions prereading readiness subtest. Inservice for parents was given to encourage their understanding and home cooperation. Cooking activities were implemented in the classroom and participation of parents in similar home activities was encouraged.

The children were post tested on the same subtest to determine progress, and all children attained reading readiness level at the end of the project. Documentation of parent participation indicated improved involvement. When surveyed, both the parents and the teacher felt that the activities were successful and effective.

The issue of language development is of paramount importance to all educators. It is of particular concern for teachers of disadvantaged children since these children are traditionally language-delayed. The acquisition of the ability to follow oral directions is a fundamental prereading skill.

Since the strategy of using cooking activities to master this skill was successful, the activities and implementation plan would be of interest to other educators who serve similar populations.

In addition, cooking experiences could be examined as possible vehicles for other cognitive objectives, particularly as they relate to language.

You are invited to examine the practicum, **Increasing the Disadvantaged Preschool Child's Ability to Follow Oral Directions Through Cooking Experiences,**

for your particular need and use.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Karas

Elizabeth A. Karas

4. PRACTICUM SUMMARY

The practicum "Increasing the Disadvantaged Preschool Child's Ability to Follow Oral Directions Through Cooking Experiences" was successful according to the post test results. Parent participation was also increased. Educators of young children who are disadvantaged could review the steps outlined in the project if they are interested in finding ways to increase reading readiness and parent participation. While the practicum took place in a Head Start program, other programs which could benefit from this information might be Chapter I, Migrant Early Childhood, and Title XX Day Care. The sub-bibliographic titles in the practicum are: Early Childhood Education, Disadvantaged Children and Language, Preschool Curriculums, Nutrition Curriculums, Cooking Activities, and Parent Involvement.