



PARTNERING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS – CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AT RISK FAIRBAULT AND TRITON MIDDLE SCHOOLS GRANT

Open Doors with Higher Education Program Evaluation

BACKGROUND

Partnering for School Success (PSS) is a family education program for immigrant Latino parents or care-givers of children in high school. The Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) program is a partnership between University of Minnesota Extension (Extension), Triton School (in Dodge Center, DGC), and Faribault Schools FRB. This program focuses on two of the major factors related to academic achievement for Latino students – family and school environments. CYFAR PSS includes three interrelated components of 1) Family strengthening education, 2) Family school partnership, and 3) Latino school navigators who act as a liaison between parents and schools.



As part of the family strengthening education, Extension has implemented the *Open Doors with Higher Education* program (*Abriendo puertas con educación superior* in Spanish), referred to as Open Doors in this report, during winter 2015 and spring 2016. This evaluation report focuses on the Open Doors trainings provided to the Latino families enrolled in the program.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Open Door program is based on Social Cognitive theory and Eco-developmental model and is directed to a) increase awareness and knowledge about the opportunities Latino children have when pursuing post-secondary education in the U.S., b) to become familiar with the U.S. education system, and c) to identify available resources to pay for post-secondary education, as well as how to work alongside in the path to High school graduation and the transition to Postsecondary education.

The sessions were held in two public school (Faribault and Triton schools) located in rural MN for seven weeks. Each session lasted approximately two hours. Meals and childcare were provided. The sessions were delivered in Spanish, the content included: 1) Higher education in the U.S.: Information to Open the Doors with Higher Education. 2) Things to consider to promote and monitor positive learning experiences. 3) Walking alongside with your children on their way towards Higher education. 4) Financial aid and opportunities to pay for post-secondary education. 5) Identifying careers and other resources to pay for post-secondary education. 6) Learning basic financial concepts to pay for post-secondary education, and 7) Planning actions for the future and review.



ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

A total of 33 participants registered in the program and completed evaluation surveys; 21 in FRB and DGC in 12 ($n = 33$). The number of female participants were 16 (48.5%), the number of male participants were 15 (45.5%), and there were two people who did not answer gender question (6.1%).

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The program was assessed using and pre and post survey, administered in a group, before the first and after the last session, each participant marked their responses in a hard copy survey. Among 33 participants, 11 participants ($n = 11$) completed pre-post surveys.



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

There was an increase in scores for 13 outcomes and a decrease in 1 outcome score. Significant positive change occurred for all measures related to feelings of capabilities and knowledge. All factors that showed statistical difference between pre and post tests are reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Participants' retrospective pre-post responses regarding capabilities and knowledge ($n = 11$)

| ITEM | PRE MEAN(SD) | POST MEAN(SD) | MEAN DIFFERENCE | t |
|--|--------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| POST-SECONDARY CONVERSATIONS W/YOUTH | 3.91(0.30) | 3.55(0.52) | -.364 | -2.39* |
| PARENT FINANCIAL AID KNOWLEDGE | 2.82(1.08) | 3.45(0.52) | 0.64 | 3.13* |
| INFORMED COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS | 2.55(0.93) | 3.36(0.50) | 0.82 | 3.61** |
| PARENT COLLEGE APPLICATION KNOWLEDGE | 2.45(1.13) | 3.09(0.70) | 0.64 | 2.28* |
| DIFFERENT WAYS TO FINANCE COLLEGE | 2.73(0.79) | 3.82(0.40) | 1.09 | 4.35** |
| STATE FINANCIAL AID QUALIFICATION KNOWLEDGE | 2.73(1.10) | 3.64(0.67) | 0.91 | 2.89* |
| FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID QUALIFICATION KNOWLEDGE | 2.64(1.03) | 3.73(0.65) | 1.09 | 3.18** |
| LOOKED FOR INFO ON FINANCING COLLEGE | 2.18(1.08) | 3.18(0.87) | 1.00 | 4.28** |
| EFFICACY IN FINDING COLLEGE LEVEL CLASSES FOR HS | 2.27(1.01) | 3.82(0.40) | 1.55 | 5.49*** |
| HIGH SCHOOL CONTACT FOR COLLEGE PLANNING | 2.27(1.10) | 3.73(0.47) | 1.45 | 5.16*** |
| DIFFERENT LENGTH PROGRAMS AND MAJORS | 3.00(1.18) | 3.82(0.40) | 0.82 | 2.52* |
| EFFICACY IN FINDING COLLEGE PREP RESOURCES | 2.36(0.92) | 3.36(0.81) | 1.00 | 4.28** |
| FINDING OF VOLUNTEER/INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES | 2.18(0.87) | 3.50(0.53) | 1.40 | 6.33*** |
| FINDING SUMMER ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES | 2.27(1.10) | 3.55(0.52) | 1.27 | 3.82** |
| FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS W/ YOUTH | 3.09(0.94) | 3.64(0.50) | 0.55 | 2.63* |
| FINANCING COLLEGE CONVERSATIONS W/YOUTH | 2.64(1.03) | 3.73(0.47) | 1.09 | 3.18** |
| UNDERSTAND INVESTMENTS THAT FINANCE COLLEGE | 2.36(1.03) | 3.91(0.30) | 1.55 | 4.95*** |
| UNDERSTAND LOANS INCLUDE INTEREST | 2.27(1.27) | 3.82(0.40) | 1.55 | 4.22** |

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p \leq .001$



Results displayed above are Faribault and Dodge Center participants combined. Among 37 questions, 13 evaluation questions showed statistically significant difference in expected direction. Participants reported practicing this skills with their children already before the training. As a result of the sessions, parents are more knowledgeable about: financial aid, college entrance exams, college application, different ways to finance college, state and federal financial aid qualification, investments that finance college, differences in length of programs and majors, and loans include interest. Also, parents feel they are more effective in finding college prep resources, finding of volunteer/internship opportunities, finding management conversations with youth, and financing college conversations with youth. More participants responded that they looked for information on financing college at post-test than pre-test.

Responses to open ended questions suggest that parents are utilizing the strategies learned during the sessions at home with their youth. These strategies include: financial management, school and community resources, stablished goals and develop a plan for higher education. More specifically, parents talked about the way to support their children educational interests:

“I learned how to help to our children to continue at school after the high school.”

“I learned that is important to know how the school system works to help my children better.”

“I learned how to set goals; they are basic for the future.”

“I learned about things our children need to do to go to college.”

“I learned that the student can take college classes when staying at high school.”

“I learned about the resources in the community to get scholarships, grants and loans.”

“I’ll explore online to look for student financial aid resources and offices when the time comes.”

“I learned about the importance of money management. I’ll take more care with my money for my children’s future.”

In summary, program participant in Open Door benefited from their participation in the project. Faribault and Triton provided great support throughout the program implementation process. Participating parents noted the value of being part of a group of parents who are going through similar experiences.

FOR MORE INFORAMTION

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