Reading Program: Henderson Libraries

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Information 520

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Dr. Linda Marion

I certify that:

- This paper/project/exam is entirely my own work.

- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or a website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.

- I have not submitted this paper / project to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature: Nicole Picano____________________
Date __11/20/12_________________
Adult Reading program for Henderson Public library

The Green Valley Public Library, Henderson Nevada

Executive Summary

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and think critically in order to be successful in society. Unfortunately, a large number of English speaking individuals are not literate and need help bridging the gap, in order to become successful in society. These people may not have finished high school or been able to receive a GED because of their lack of reading skills. In addition, a majority of these people work two minimum wage jobs or more in order to make ends meet, and most of them still fall below poverty level.

The Green Valley Public Library, as part of the Henderson Library system can help with one component of literacy skills. This component is a basic adult reading program. The Green Valley public library proposes a beginning adult reading program for English speaking patrons, who need to gain literacy skills. This program would allow the Green Valley Library to make the community more literate by giving adults 18 years and older the opportunity to gain reading skills at beginning reading levels. My name is Nicole Picano and I am one of the librarians at the Green Valley, working to improve literacy rates through reading in the community. In order to achieve our goal we need funding for 8 weeks, for $9681.25.
Setting

The Henderson Public Library system was established in 1943 after a petition was signed to create Henderson Public School Library. The library remained for years as a library for children and continued to offer reading programs and children’s programming. In 1953, a more permanent building was built for the library and community, known as the official County Library of Henderson. Henderson now offers six locations throughout the city that cooperate with public libraries in Southern Nevada, Nevada System of High Education, Clark County School District, to provide quality services to library residents (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).

One of the libraries in the six locations in Henderson is the Green Valley Public Library. The Green Valley Public Library located at the corner of Sunset Road and Green Valley Parkway is the newest addition to the Henderson Public Library system. Green Valley Public Library was built in 1987 but was remolded in 2009. The 2009 renovation gave way to a 22,500 square foot building that has a comprehensive collection of fiction, non-fiction, children’s, and audiovisual materials. The library is also the center for Henderson’s Libraries Federal Depository library operations, which is the only Federal Depository Library within the 3rd Congressional District of Nevada (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).

Community/Patrons

The Green Valley Library serves a diverse population of Henderson that is home to 276,792 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The people of the community are in planned communities with upper-middle class families. However, the original town site houses a large area of subsidized housing. Within the subsidized housing are 11% of families who are low income (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). A majority of the patrons that come to the library are
homeless, which is 16.8% (City of Las Vegas, 2012) of the population that come to the library (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).

We have 101,885 patrons that are registered users of the library. Out of these people, 41,412 attended some type of free programs offered by the library, which are mostly outreach programs. The outreach programs that the library offers consist of literacy classes and reading resources. The Henderson libraries rank third in Nevada in population and library users. In addition, the library ranks third in Nevada in materials circulation and electronic resources (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).

Staff

The Henderson Public Library has a staff of 119 and 37 of these people have Master’s Degrees in Library and information system. Out of the 119 in the Henderson Public Library, 20 of them are at the Green Valley Public Library. There are 14 reference, circulation and youth services libraries within the 20 employees at the library. I, Nicole Picano, am one of those reference librarians in the Green Valley Public Library. The libraries staff also includes our director Tom Fay who is the head of all 6 libraries in Henderson, 2 assistant directors, and our immediate managers within the Green Valley Public Library. Furthermore, the board of trustees includes seven members that meet on the third Thursday of every month, 12 times a year.

Mission statement

We at all six of our Henderson Library locations adhere to the mission statement below:

Henderson Libraries seeks to cultivate a literate community by providing every citizen free access to books and information resources, as well as state of the art technology that
supports work, school and recreational activities (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).

Our mission at the library is to commit focus to our patrons, equitable service, quality and integrity. We feel that everyone should be provided with equitable service no matter race, income, or educational background. However, in the last few months we needed to ask ourselves some questions relating to our service. One of those questions was how do we fulfill the mission for a literate community?

Statement of Need

The librarians, including myself, took the time to research the above question in order to find a better solution to our problem. In 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics measured adult literacy in the nation as a whole. The findings were interesting to say the very least. Participants performed on different reading activities and a scale from 0 to 500 measured the findings. Along the scale was below basic, basic, intermediate, and proficient. The study found that the national average for adults who lack basic literacy skills is 14.5% (Institute of Education Sciences, 2003).

We have a big problem here in Nevada. Nevada ranks near the bottom with literacy rates. According to the National Center for Education the 8th graders in Nevada ranked 258, below the national average of 264. Only 26 percent of people were at or above proficient level and 69 percent only performed at or above basic level when it came to reading compared to other states (Institute of Education Sciences, 2011). In addition, we can narrow that number down even further. The City of Henderson where the Henderson libraries reside is in the Clark County district. The district has 18 percent of adults who lack basic literacy skills (Institute of Education Sciences, 2003).
The Nevada Department of Education introduced a plan in 2011 “Improving Literacy for a Strong Nevada: The State Literacy Plan for Nevadans Birth through Grade 12 and Beyond.” The plan gives detailed information that states, “The plan was made in part of the small graduate rate of only 71.4% in Nevada (Nevada Department of Education, 2012). The Clark County School District graduation rate is 65% as of June 4, 2012, which includes the public schools in Henderson, Nevada (Clark County School District, 2012). What does this mean? It means that children are lacking the reading skill set to perform in school and are dropping out or not graduating. These students end up going into society with beginning reading skills (as seen above) and are not able to perform in society as adults.

The plan made by the Nevada Department of Education, talks about community involvement in order to help students and adults become literate. A way for the Green Valley Library to become involved community members is to create a reading program for adults 18 years and older who lack the basic reading skill set. However, this is a challenge for the library to help community members because of the constrained budget that forced almost all programs, including literacy programs, to be cut from the library. Now, patrons are sent elsewhere in the district to receive literacy training, but that does not need to be. The Green Valley Public Library can fulfill its mission statement of a literate community by modeling a reading program for patrons in the Henderson area, so that patrons do not have to travel far and can help one another in their own area.

Reading programs in other areas of the Las Vegas Valley have worked in the past. One of these programs is by the Community College of Southern Nevada. The Community College of Southern Nevada has a program in place based off the Nevada adult education system. These facts are off beginning levels. We are only going to discuss this because that is what our program
will be based on. According to the report titled *Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level*, 102 individuals at 16,973 total hours have entered the program at beginning literacy levels. 69 of these people completed the program and 24 advanced one or more levels in the program, 67.65% of people completed the beginning level (Nevada Adult Education, 2011). As you can see, more than half of the people have succeeded in the program. If the community college can achieve these results, so can the Green Valley Library through our own program that can help the homeless, low-income families, and others that need literacy assistance.

**Proposed Program**

**Project Goals**

The mission of the Henderson Library District is to “cultivate a literate community by providing every citizen with access to book and information resources (Henderson District Public Libraries, 2012).” As a library, we want to help cultivate by doing our piece as a community and improving literacy as the Nevada Department of Education suggests. The outline listed below will help adults with beginning literacy skills as they relate to reading.

Our goals of the program are to introduce basic (beginning) skills to the patrons in need at the Green Valley Public Library. Once we introduce these basic pronunciation and vocabulary skills, we will reinforce those skills among our patrons through practice during class sessions. Finally, the patrons will be able to achieve higher scores on the CASAS, which are assessment tests through a non-profit organization that measure basic skills set. In this case, it we will be using the reading skill set tests.

In order for us to achieve these goals, we will hire volunteers to help licensed teachers and licensed substitute teachers who have background in the English language, and preferably
have certification in reading literacy. The volunteers and teachers will receive specific training on how to teach adults beginning reading skills. In addition, the teachers and volunteers have 30 days to complete online classes that relate to the beginning literacy reading assessments CASAS. This will help the teachers and volunteers understand test scores and standards to meet the needs of beginning literacy in adults.

The Specifics of the Program

Time Frame

Our program would start out as an 8-week trial program beginning in June and ending at the end of July. The trial program would take place at the library in the spare training room. This is a good period for the library to start the program and make adjustments because, school is ending for summer, and people are taking summer vacation. This makes the library more available for use in the summer months and allows all staff on hand to help with the program. The program would run for 8 weeks at 90 minutes a per session for a total of 96 hours. The sessions would be one day a week.

Planning and Implementation of the Program

We would have two librarians, including myself a former teacher, in charge of the program. The two of us would take turns overseeing the program by restructuring our workload in the library. We would start out by meeting with the Director of Education in the Clark County School District (part of Henderson, Nevada) in October of the previous year. We would explain our program and ask for help finding qualified teachers, substitute teachers, and volunteers that make a good fit within the program. The process of reviewing the interest questionnaires, resumes, and panel interview will take one month because we would only speak to the most interested and qualified persons for the job.
Marketing

In December, we will start our other marketing strategies within the community. First, we will send out flyers to the people of the Green Valley Library community and post these flyers on our website and building. Second, the Clark County School District will post a bulletin on their building and website, in case children have parents who want the training. Third, the Green Valley library will host an open house. Patrons interested in beginning adult literacy can come in and talk with the librarians and teachers, so they can have a chance to learn about the program and ask questions. Lastly, the local news station will make an announcement, as it gets closer to the program starting. Marketing is extremely important as stated in this study, “respondents assigned considerable importance to using a variety of media, ensuring that messages are accessible, providing clear instructions for getting additional information, and using face to face recruitment strategies” (Douglas, Valentine, & Cervero, 1999).

Materials needed

A few materials are needed to start out the program. First, tables and chairs will be provided by the library (from storage). Second, a marker board already exists within the library meeting room, so the only addition would be markers in case they ran out. Third, we would need paper, pencils, pens, erasers and basic office supplies for in-classroom purposes only. Fourth, enough pre-test and post-tests to serve everyone in the reading program. Other miscellaneous materials are picture books and phonics books.

The Curriculum taught

Day 1

Once we hired our team, which consists of two teachers and two volunteers (volunteers are there to assist teachers by walking around and helping students), we would plan the
curriculum for the beginning adult reading program. The curriculum for the program would be based on the Nevada Adult Education curriculum. Our patrons would start out taking a pre-test. The pre-test is specifically designed by CASAS titled “Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment” (CASAS, 2012). The ranges of scores on the test are from 180 to 201. The patrons are to take the test and see the score. It is from that score it will be determined which class the student will be placed in, which is either level I or II.

*Weeks 1-8*

The curriculum divides into two parts based on the CASAS scores of the patrons. The first two parts of the lesson consist of pronunciation. According to the education curriculum, “Pronunciation – Levels I & II are 96-hour courses designed to teach adult students to hear and speak the sounds of the Roman alphabet correctly, as the sounds are used in American English, and broaden the students’ basic English vocabulary” (Nevada Adult Education, 2001). Once the patrons complete pronunciation level I, they move on to pronunciation level II, which consists of sound combinations, basic vocabulary, and basic grammar.

Since some of the patrons may be beyond level I pronunciation, we will have a class set up for level II for those students. If it so happens that all of the patrons are at level I pronunciation then the level II teacher plus volunteers will help out in the level I classroom, and vice versa. Both teachers can teach at either level. The point is that everyone is there to collaborate with one another. Some patrons may finish faster because of where they are in the program. However, the patrons who test above 201 are recommended to attend another program at an outreach center or library.
One big component of the lessons is phonics. The system focus on phonics is one of the teaching methods. The focus on phonics system: “teaches the relationships between the letters of the written language (graphemes) and the individual sounds” (Carnine, Kame’enu, Tarver, & Silbert, 2012). Patrons will have a copy of a phonics workbook for practice in the classroom. Once patrons understand the phonics system they can move, on to comprehension which uses picture books “because there is not much to remember in a picture book, readers can more easily recall significant events in the story for retelling” (Sharp, 1991) This is how vocabulary obtained and comprehending begins.

*Method of Evaluation*

The students are going to start by taking the CASAS pre-test in the beginning of the program and the posttest at the end of the program. It will be apparent after the program that those who scored lower on the pre-test will improve at least by 60 percent on the posttest. In between, the students are expected to do work in the phonics workbook and read simple pictures books that are provided by the library. In addition, the students will be given tests once a week that relate to the CASAS testing, so that they may reinforce skills taught in the classroom.

As for the teachers and volunteers, my colleague and I, along with an administrator from the school district will be popping in from time to time. We will have an evaluation sheet that relates to the standards for CASAS and we will see if those standards are being implemented through lessons and interaction with students. In addition, the teachers will have a chance to evaluate the volunteers (properly helping students on assignments) and the volunteers will have a chance to evaluate the teachers (effectively teaching). Once all the data is collected from the evaluations, I will sit down with the teachers, administrators, and volunteers to review what we
can change, if anything. We will then discuss future class opportunities, such as adding a reading level in the program and adding additional class sessions to the program.

**Proposed Budget for beginning adult reading program 8 weeks**

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Conclusion

Week on of the program students (patrons) come to the library not understanding basic syllabus or words. At the end of week 8, these students are reading simply picture books and comprehending these books. Then, these patrons feel successful because they accomplished beginning reading skills, and now they are ready to move onto other programs in the valley or even ones that the library will provide. These patrons can work their way to a better job knowing they can accomplish anything. In addition, the Green Valley library can help the community become more literate one program at a time. In the end, it is about helping others achieve an education, an education they may not be able to get otherwise.
Appendix

A. Resumes of teachers

B. Questionnaires for teachers and volunteers

C. Resumes for volunteers

D. Flyers for marketing

E. Questions for Panel interview

F. CASAS test results pre and post
References

Carnine, D., Kame'enu, E., Tarver, S., & Silbert, J. (2012). *Six Approaches to Phonics Instruction*. Retrieved from Education Inc:


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