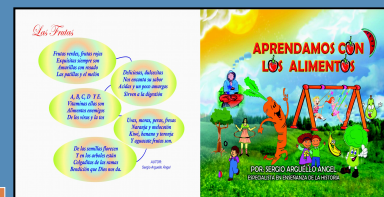




LEARNING WITH FOOD COLEGIO NICÓLAS BUENAVENTURA Sergio Arguello Ángel (Bogotá, Colombia) sergey0227@hotmail.es



ABSTRACT

The project "Learning with Food", on development since 2010 at the school Nicolas Buenaventura, emerged as result of the need to implement healthy eating practices in children, in order to positively influence their health and their cognitive skills development through the use of different institutional spaces among them the school cafeteria. In order to achieve academic goals it was necessary to incorporate this program to the existing curriculum. Various strategies were developed, including: Activities for cycles one and two, a CD with songs about healthy eating, and a workbook.

This project has allowed teachers to perform an interdisciplinary work around good nutrition, and has influenced students attitude in the school cafeteria, where it has been possible to observe a greater disposition towards making healthier choices while positively impacting their personal development.

BACKGROUND

When in 2010 a school cafeteria was opened at the Nicolas Buenaventura School, the project author started searching for options of incorporating it to pedagogical practices. How can we make it part of our daily teachings? What elements the new project will need? What materials would be more effective on providing an integral educational environment? These were some of the questions that started this project foundation. The objective was to integrate the school cafeteria with the different developmental areas and school organizational cycles defined as Cycle one for first and second grades and Cycle 2 which includes third, fourth and fifth grades.

The project was initially deployed for cycle 2 since its creator, Sergio Argüello, was teaching classes on those grades. The first step was to observe students interactions and decisions in the cafeteria. Very quickly was possible to observe their preference of fast food over vegetables and their lack of good behavior in a communitarian dinning atmosphere.

As part of a solution to these problems, a workbook called "Learning with Food" was conceptualized, with the first edition published in 2011. This workbook focuses on guiding kids towards healthy nutrition while developing their mental processes and logical skills according to their age. Communications, arts and humanities are some of the areas incorporated on this educational plan.

In order to expand the project to students on Cycle One, the "Learning with Food, The food Train" workbook was published, complemented by a CD containing seven songs composed by the project creator, Sergio Argüello. The songs cover the main topics of each unit, and based on them there are a series of activities integrating the different human dimensions and development fields like art, expression, science, history and mathematics.

WHAT IS NEXT

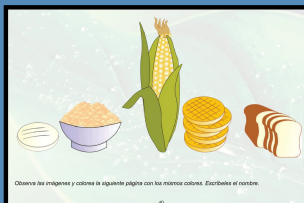
During the project development thanks to the collaboration and the motivation of the members of the educational community, new activities have been created solidifying the educational experience. As part of these ideas, at the end of the cycle two, fifth grade students are working the workbook "the book of health with foods", in which students after preparing speeches on food, choose the one that interest them the most, make drawings, take notes and complement the information from different sources with emphasis on its uses and benefits.

Next objective is to develop a Multimedia version of the project available to students on the internet making possible to add interactive information and activities and developing new ideas and initiatives in a timely manner.

Additionally we are on the process of translating the songs on the CD to English which can be used as an English teaching aid for our students as well as a way to expand the reach of the project to English speaking communities, specially on those areas with poor nutritional habits.



Pictures 1 and 2. Children dressed up in the food fair, project «Learn with food» and workshop with parents.



Pictures 3 and 4; CD: "the flavors of the music, the food train" ; activities from workbooks.

RESULTS

Academic requirements are very extensive and including nutrition and healthy eating materials to daily schedule is not an easy task. This project allows teaches to achieve their academic goals while providing a solid understanding of the importance of a balanced nutrition and positively influencing kids towards making better food choices.

A change of attitude in the school cafeteria, has been observed in students with clear tendencies to select healthy food and the development of different competencies that have a positive impact on their quality of life and personal development.

Parents have been integrated as primary responsible of their children nutrition, with the aim to learn and implement habits for healthy eating in their homes. They are the ones that have contributed in a decisive manner in the implementation of the project, designing and developing activities for all children. To this end, parents are oriented beforehand by the respective teacher.

In 2012, the project won first place at the national level and third place at the Latin American level in the competition of good practices of promoting health in the school. This competition is organized by the World Health Organization, and PROINAPSA, a program sponsored by Universidad Industrial de Santander.