

# Teaching Technology to Hispanic Youth: A Report on Factors Affecting Students' Learning

German Cutz and Emma Theuri

Research Report No. 46

January 2011

## ABSTRACT

University of Illinois Extension, in partnership with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Joliet, Illinois, offered a technology summer program for Hispanic youth from June 22 to July 22, 2009. The program, "Looking Back, Moving Forward," utilized self-directed learning activities during the entire program. Eight out of fourteen Hispanic students completed sixty hours of training by attending a three-hour class from Monday through Friday. There were seven females and one male whose ages ranged from twelve to seventeen years old. To assess students' knowledge before and after the program, they were administered pre- and post-tests. The highest score on the pre-test was 32 percent, but that went up to 88 percent on the post-test. To document the factors that affected students' learning, they completed a self-report card every day. Student reports on factors that positively affected their learning included: 1) sense of accomplishment; 2) excitement; 3) experimenting; 4) self-directed learning; 5) confidence; and 6) time management. Factors that limited students' learning included: 1) inability to complete tasks; 2) frustration; 3) equipment malfunctions; 4) uncertainty; and 5) tediousness.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. German Cutz is Sustainable Families and Communities Associate Cooperative Extension Educator in the Department of Extension, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut, having recently moved there from his position as Extension Specialist – Spanish Language Programming at the University of Illinois. He received an M.A. in University Teaching Methods from San Carlos University of Guatemala, as well as two master's degrees, one in Natural Resources and Environmental Management and the other in Community Education and Participatory Educational Methods, and an Ed.D. in Adult and Community Education from Ball State University. Dr. Cutz has over twenty years experience in participatory curriculum development and implementation for marginalized and at-risk populations, and has field experience in both developed and developing countries.

Dr. Emma Theuri is a private consultant speaking on youth programs, strategic thinking, planning and management; and program evaluation. Formerly the Will County Extension Director with University of Illinois Extension, she oversaw Extension programming, building linkages, collaborations, and networks, and has developed and implemented entrepreneurship programs for low-income families. Dr. Theuri received a Master's degree in General Secondary School Administration, an Education Specialist degree in School Administration and Supervision, and her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri, Columbia.