

“Infectious Rumors”: Development and Distribution Strategies of a Fotonovela on Immunization

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Background/Introduction

A fotonovela is a booklet that tells a dramatic, engaging story in a format consisting of still photos, captions, bubbles and text.

Since 2000, the USC School of Pharmacy Health Literacy Program has produced and distributed a series of fotonovelas on a wide variety of health topics, with a colorful cast of characters confronted by health-related challenges. With English and Spanish versions of the fotonovela in one booklet, the goal is to empower underserved populations to make informed health care decisions, seek health care appropriately, and live a healthy lifestyle. The latest fotonovela in the series is on the topic of immunizations and is titled *Infectious Rumors*.

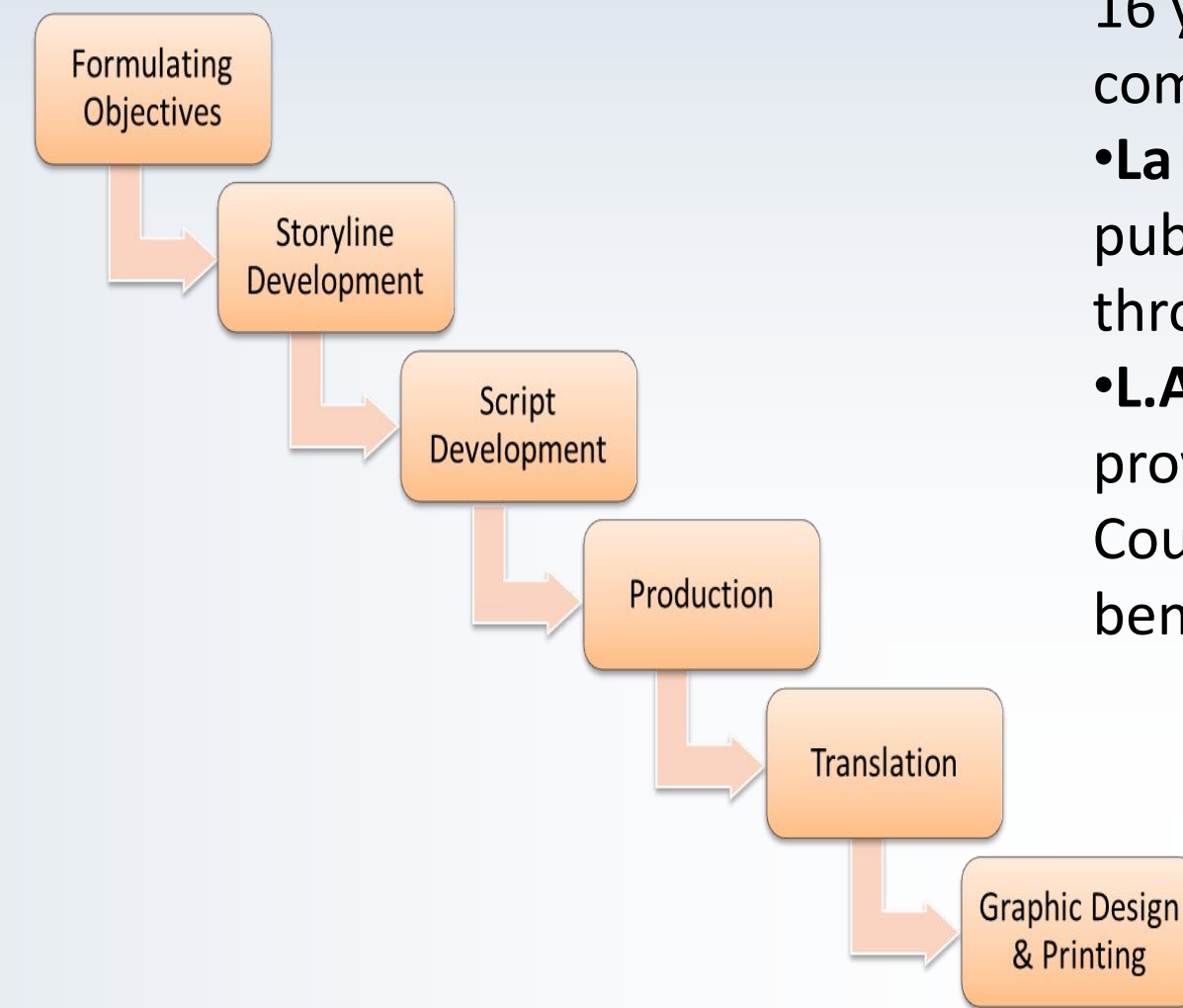
The USC School of Pharmacy Health Literacy Program is unique in that it leverages the collective efforts of vastly different community organizations, including a daily Spanish-language newspaper, La Opinión, and a Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plan, L.A. Care Health Plan, to consult, translate and distribute the fotonovelas.

Purpose

Infectious Rumors addresses disparities in vaccination rates among Latino and African American populations residing in underserved areas of Los Angeles County. The purpose of *Infectious Rumors* is to increase awareness of the importance of childhood and adult immunizations, debunk common misperceptions, and change health-seeking behaviors of parents.

Methods/Collaboration Process/Intervention

Production Process



Collaborative Partners

- USC School of Pharmacy Health Literacy Program – 16 year history of creating fotonovelas for underserved communities in Southern California.
- La Opinión – daily Spanish-language newspaper published in Los Angeles, California and distributed throughout six counties in Southern California.
- L.A. Care Health Plan – established in 1997, L.A. Care provides health coverage to low-income Los Angeles County residents and serves more than 2 million beneficiaries.

Division of Labor

- USC: fotonovela creation and production
- La Opinión: printing and distribution
- L.A. Care Health Plan: key health messages guidance

Discussion

Despite vaccination successes as preventive tools that improve health, vaccination rates remain inconsistent across varying demographics, and are particularly low in Latino and African American populations, revealing the profound need for innovative, culturally sensitive health education materials that are capable of changing attitudes and behaviors.

A novel collaboration of a pharmacy school health literacy program, a health plan, and a newspaper made it possible to reach an estimated 150,000 people to deliver a vital health message. This collaboration proved to be a model for future projects. It also enabled us to leverage partnerships and resources to increase the outreach to the identified audience.

Provided within the fotonovela, people not only received a captivating story discussing the importance of vaccination, but also a section debunking common vaccination myths, Q&A section answering common questions regarding vaccines, a CDC childhood vaccination schedule, and a breakdown of each vaccination, how the disease is spread, symptoms, and complications of the disease.

Results

Increasing the reach of audience through partnership:

- 50,000 immunization fotonovelas were printed and distributed through La Opinión newspaper, 7,500 were distributed by L.A. Care, and 2,500 will be distributed to safety net clinics and health fairs.
- For every fotonovela received it is read by a mean of 1.53 additional people (t=1.99, p<.05) Unger et al 2012.
- 60,000 copies X reach of 2.53 persons/copy = 151,800 reached (approximately)

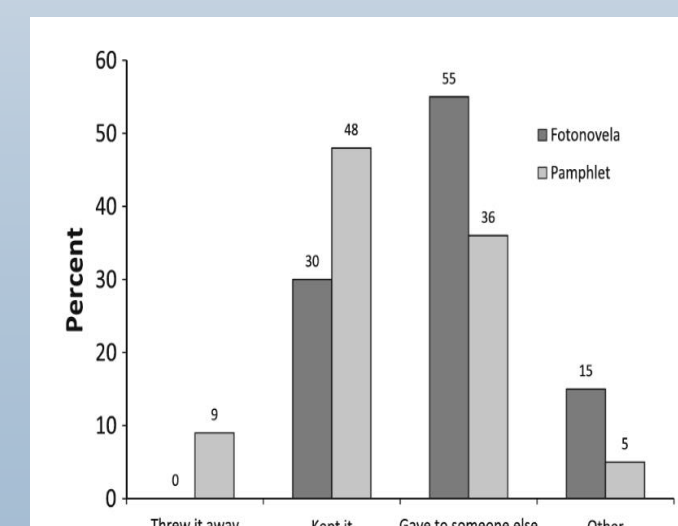


Fig. 5 What participants did with the material after class

Limitations

- Effectiveness of fotonovela unknown
- Fotonovela may not reflect concerns of other Latino groups as formative research was conducted with Mexican and Central American populations

