Grounding the Online Graduate Classroom: Service-Learning Partnerships for Professional Development and Advocacy

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Philosophy of Teaching: Central Elements

• Balanced match of support and challenge
• Integration of content, engagement and service to promote growth
• A firm grounding in theory, professional models, standards and scholarship necessary for development

The end of all education should surely be service to others. Cesar Chavez
Service-Learning: Isn’t that just for undergrads?
• Service-learning is a method of instruction designed to integrate academic content with service and engagement.

• By encouraging students to use content-based skills to meet a defined community need, instructors are able to foster a sense of social responsibility and engagement while promoting professional development.

• Service-learning is NOT strictly volunteering or providing outreach.
Continuum of Community Engagement and Service Experiences

- Engagement
  - Mutually beneficial partnership, shared power
  - Transformational
- Service-Learning
  - Curricular engagement, mutually beneficial partnership, linked to academic content and professional development
  - Transformational
- Outreach
  - Utilizes professional expertise of ECU Faculty and Students
  - Transactional
- Volunteerism
  - Designed to meet needs of community partner, professional expertise not required
  - Transactional
Service-Learning in Counselor Education Program

School Counseling Professional Specialization
Cyclical Process

- Engagement with academic content
- Service opportunity utilizing academic expertise
- Evaluation of experience and impact
- Reflection
- Challenge to consider issues of social justice and advocacy
- Reflection
Counseling in Schools Course SL Project

- Integrated Data-Driven Service-Learning Project (IDSL Project)
- Students choose partner teams and school counselor with whom to collaborate
- Must address social justice/advocacy theme

Includes following components:
- Community Cultural Context Essay
- E-Poster Proposal
- 4 Reflexive Journals
- Narrative explanation of service initiative with rationale developed from professional literature
- Full MEASURE (Stone & Dahir, 2011)
- MEASURE Report Card
- E-Poster presenting project
- Artifacts that were used in the initiative (lesson plans, group session plans, parent ed and/or marketing materials) are left behind for the school counselor’s continued use.
Unique to Online Graduate Students...

- Developmentally more prepared to direct their own engagement
- Have existing professional connections and relationships
- Ability to build upon connections in the students’ home communities
Family-School-Community Teams: An Initiative to Support Probation-Involved Youth

Purpose
An initiative intended to enhance team engagement by family, school and community members in the task of supporting probation-involved youth to successfully conclude that involvement.

Rationale
- Youth with multiple disorders and disabilities are disproportionately represented in the justice system and in the alternative school setting.
- Approaches which address the needs of youth in all their environments have a greater chance for success.
- Family involvement makes a positive difference in student achievement, attendance and behavior as well as in family efficacy.

Initiative
What we did for this initiative was to form a team for each student, emphasizing to them that this was their team. Two data elements were measured; the number of parents who became actively engaged with the school, and the number of community resource partners who were involved to serve the needs of the students and/or their families.

Results
Family engagement with the school increased through this initiative from 20% to 100%.
The number of community resource partners has doubled, from 3 to 6.

References
Curriculum Night at South Central High School

Overview

South Central was labeled a low performing school by the state of North Carolina in 2010 because the graduation rate was below 60% for 3 consecutive years. As a result they (and 2 other schools) were awarded a 3 year grant to help improve graduation rates. A key element of this grant is parent involvement. Curriculum Night was designed to help educate parents about curriculum and to give them tips about how to help their children with academic skills.

Literature Review

“When parents were more involved in their children’s schooling, the children performed better academically (as reflected by grade point averages) and were more engaged in school. Students reported more effort, concentration, and attention across four main subject areas: math, English, social studies, and science.” (Gonzalez 2002, p.132) Our project was aimed at helping parents become more involved in their children’s academic lives.

Curriculum Night

The program began with teacher and staff introductions. After that parents were served snacks, (made and served by the students!) and given a chance to look over the presentation schedule and fill out the pre-survey. Parents were able to attend 3-20 minute sessions in any subject area. At the end everyone came back to complete post-survey and for a prize raffle.

References


Stakeholders Unite

2. Teachers: Prepared and presented critical information about curriculum and helping strategies.
3. Administrators: Provided meeting space for the event. Used money in their budget to pay for food.
4. Students: Prepared and served food to teachers and parents.
5. Community Members/Businesses: Provided donations for raffle.

Analysis

- Pre-survey results reflect the percentage of parents who felt familiar with curriculum knowledge before the event.
- Post-survey results reflect the percentage of parents who felt they gained knowledge to assist their child with curriculum after the event.
Tackle Hunger!
A Service Learning Initiative at Cape Hatteras Secondary School

Purpose
This poster shares an initiative undertaken by staff and students at Cape Hatteras Secondary School, addressing childhood hunger in a small community. The initiative involved a food drive that was linked to community service projects and encouraged student participation. The targeted group of students were encouraged to help plan and implement the program, exposing them to the positive value of community service while also developing valuable career skills such as interviewing and documentation, goal setting, self-direction, and self-management skills.

Rationale
One in five children in North Carolina go hungry. Approximately 23% of children in low-income families rely on food banks for food assistance. Hungry children are not only more likely to experience health issues, but they also struggle in school and are more susceptible to behavioral and emotional issues that can have long-term effects. Addressing this issue at a school level, while developing valuable college and career readiness skills, creates a win-win situation.

What We Did!
A targeted group of students volunteered to help plan and implement the program, encouraging participation and community engagement. The FOOD Drive was successful, and the students involved were able to make a positive impact in their community.

Results/Impact
Prior to the initiative, the targeted group was surveyed about the value of community service. The survey indicated that 40% of the students believed in the value of community service. After the initiative, the survey showed that 70% of the students believed in the value of community service, and 60% of the students reported feeling more connected to their community.

Table 1: Student Food Drive Participation for available data years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>100 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>150 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>200 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College/Career Readiness Skills
- Critical thinking
- Understanding systems
- Collaboration
- Listening and communications
- Problem solving
- Social skills
- Self-direction
- Goal setting
- Self-management skills
- Learning to advocate
- Critical thinking
- Application of knowledge
- Integration of personal growth into career development

Suggestions for Future Work
Suggested areas for future work include expanding the program to include more volunteers and raising awareness about the importance of community service. The program could also focus on incorporating more volunteers from different age groups and backgrounds to create a more diverse and inclusive program.

The Food Pantry...
The Hatteras Island Food Pantry is housed at the United Methodist Church in Buxton, and serves the people of all seven villages on the island. It is the only food pantry on the island that is recognized by Dare County Department of Social Services. The pantry, which began in 1990, generally helps about 4,000 families a year with about 80,000 meals, a vital resource for those in need.

https://www.kansasfoodbank.org/files/2010/02/mmg_chart_usmap.png
If you are interested in pursuing the S-L Designation for your course...

- http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/sl/servicelearning.cfm