High-Impact Service-Learning in an Urban Teacher Preparation Program: A Grant Funded Literacy Project with Incarcerated Youth

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The Study

- Qualitative study on students in a teacher preparation program.
- Impact of using a service-learning project as a pedagogical tool.
Project Objectives

- Promote citizenship and student learning in a teacher preparation program.
- Provide community outreach to the closest school to the university campus.
• Introduce pre-service teachers to teaching special populations, specifically at-risk/incarcerated youth

• Provide youthful detainees with a creative, unique, and rewarding literacy development project - writing, illustrating, and publishing five children’s picture books

• Provide Juvenile Justice Center teachers with professional support
The Grant

- State Representative Sylvester Turner Community Engagement Funds
Criminal Background Check  $10.43 \times 37 = $385.91

Book Self-Publishing Package $1449.00 \times 5 = $7,245.00

Illustrating Materials $30.00 \times 5 = $150.00

PROJECT TOTAL = $7,780.91
Persons Served

- Education students in the PED 3301: Introduction to Special Populations course
- Incarcerated youth at charter school located in the Juvenile Probation Department
- Juvenile Justice Center teachers
Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) students, working under the guidance of UHD pre-service teachers, write drafts for five children’s picture books.

Pre-service teachers provide JJC students with editing feedback and writing instruction at the point of need.

JJC students, writing under pseudonyms, add biographies to the book drafts.

Submit the five illustrated children’s book drafts to Author House, a self-publishing book company.
Obtain permission from JJC charter school principal to conduct project.
Obtain permission from university administration to take students to JJC.
Pre-service teachers and university faculty arrange date and time with JJC administrative staff to obtain pre-criminal background check clearances.
Pre-service teachers and university faculty obtain administrative permission from university for fieldtrip to JJC.
Project Administration

- Collect signed fieldtrip waivers from UHD students.
- Train pre-service teachers in teaching at-risk youth, writing instruction methodology and children’s picture book publishing protocol.
- Conduct field trip orientation tour of JJC.
- JJC staff visit university to orientate pre-service teachers in working with JJC students.
- Pre-service teachers, under the guidance of university professors and JJC teachers, visit JJC to complete drafts of children’s books with JJC students.
Project Administration

- Provide copies of the published children’s picture books to JJC students, teachers, and administrators.
- Provide report and copies of published children’s picture books to the grant provider, State Representative Sylvester Turner, and the university Office of Global Citizenship.
Juvenile Justice Center Orientation
Juvenile Justice Center Photos
Research Questions

- How did the literacy project influence students’ attitudes and perspectives towards the culture of special populations?
- What impact did service-learning have on the pre-service teachers’ knowledge and understanding of individuals within special populations?
- What did the literacy project reveal to the pre-service teachers about the literacy development of the incarcerated youth?
Methodology

- Using an emergent coding method (Merriam, 1998), the authors sought to establish a triangulation of the findings across multiple transcripts. Results indicated students’ attitudes, perspectives, and knowledge of special populations and literacy development broadened as a result of the project.
Results

Pre-service teachers’
- Attitudes
- Perspectives
- Knowledge of
  - special populations
- literacy development broadened as a result of the project.
Findings

Positive outcomes for:

- Pre-Service Teachers
- Juvenile Justice Center (community organization)
- University
Added to the Literature

- Validated service learning as a pedagogical tool in teacher preparation programs.
Books For Sale Online