

May 19, 2009
Tuesday 1:45-3:45
TLISI Meeting Notes

Preparing Undergraduates to Work with Vulnerable Youth Populations in Community-Based Settings

Presenter: Heather Voke; Philosophy and chairing nascent 'Education Inquiry and Justice' Program

- A lot of individual community-based learning programs going on around campus. Heather's project is an effort to create cohesion and open up communication among these various groups.
- There are many silos of expertise going on around campus, but this is really time intensive.
- Each individual program has specific needs – targets specific populations. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to absorb all training into one. Still want to maintain the goals and needs of each program.

Heather:

-Professor's teaching assistant (someone who has already engaged in community-based teaching/learning) functions as a mentor for the new students.

Nathaniel:

-Coordinators who are invested in the concept of what the program looks like and interact with the community in communicating what the program is about. These surround elementary school youth.

What do we need?

1) What are we doing well?

-A lot of different CBL programs around campus.

2) What do we need to work on?

-Anecdotal information from students indicates that G'town students do not understand how students lacked engagement and cultural differences between them and students in urban communities.

-Need more guided processes and outlets for reflection. Ongoing de-briefing is necessary.

What might a common program look like?

Heather:

-Series of workshops for coordinators/mentors

-Faculty development for professors interested in engaging in community-based learning.

-Professional development for program coordinators (i.e. Heather, Nathaniel, Christy, etc.). Offer topical workshops that allow each to learn from one another and open up lines of communication.

- Summer Institute (grant funded) – community immersion program
- A model we could use – Apprenticeship in Teaching Program model as a possibility
- Jesuit Humanitarian Assistance Model (new - immersion programs over the summer)
- John Hersh (Law and English) – Literacy and the Law Course/community based learning in Sursum Corda community
- Reflection model – students experience and we help them process. Program coordinators or faculty members run discussion section type groups. Perhaps a blog?
- What can we require of student organizations? Tie requirements (workshops) to funding? Other institutions do require training for student organization leaders.
- Tie workshops (make mandatory?) to CBL experience.
- Contextualization about D.C. and how to manage behavior and expectations. Stick to more general concepts.
- Should we shift the dialogue surrounding expectations? (Students need to understand that they WON'T be able to completely manage classrooms, etc. – that is why people go to school for education). Should be about a learning process and critically analyzing situations. Need to come at this with a broad perspective, both to make appealing to the various programs on campus and give students a better perspective on their experiences.
- Recognizing positive aspects of the communities in which students are volunteering.
- How can we encourage more peer education?
- Leadership Symposium? Like a conference for students involved in education and community outreach.

What are some options in terms of research for students based on CBL?

- Princeton has a policy project option for students.