

Cabrini Connections/ Edgewood College Partnership

History

In 1994, Dr. Holub forged a relationship with Dan Bassill, the Director of Cabrini Connections. The relationship allowed Dr. Holub to conduct qualitative research at that site in Chicago, IL. The ethnographic case study research led to the development of a grounded theory. It posited that youth living at the poverty level need, inherently, to become self-determined. Dr. Holub defined self-determination and created a curriculum that was then adopted by Cabrini Connections.

In 1998, when Tom Holub became full-time, tenure track faculty at Edgewood College, he proposed to Dean Joseph Schmiedicke, that a relationship between the college and the center be created. To that end, and with the support of the School of Education (formerly Education Department), Dr. Holub started the project as it exists today.

Format of the Project

Graduate students at Edgewood College, who are interested in this urban experience, enroll in 6 credits of instruction on campus. Dr. Holub teaches the two courses, one relative to families and to transitions that youth experience, and one concentrating on learning differences. At the end of the two classes, the students are required to have an emersion experience on site at Cabrini Green (3-4 days). Dr. Holub supervises the experience and its focus is aimed at helping youth discover a personal future. Within the emersion, students stay at dormitory housing and Dr. Holub holds class every night. The classes within the emersion experience are centered around adult learning theory and relate to the work that has been done and that will be done the next day. These PM sessions are referred to as Reflection Seminars. At the end of the emersion experience, each Graduate engages in an electronic mentorship, maintaining communications about the students "futures plan". Then, finally, the Cabrini youth visit Edgewood College, and culminate the year long experience. Students from the Cabrini Cohort are encouraged to complete the program year after year, and many Graduate students voluntarily return.

This project, funded in part by Scott Flanagan, Vice President at Edgewood College, and the Admissions Department, has been in place for 9 years, effecting nearly 200 Graduate students and 227 at-risk youth. Longitudinal data on the outcomes realized by these youth is gathered during the programming as well.

Updating Best Practices

In 2006, Mr. Greg Gorres, a student in Teacher Education became the first School of Education Ebben Fellow. He has assisted Dr. Holub in gathering additional qualitative data on the project.

Future Directions

In addition to being selected to conduct cross-city trainings for the Chicago Housing Authority in 2007, there are two proposals in place for program expansion. The proposals, if funded, will expand upon the richness of the experience, by reaching additional Edgewood College students. Proposal #1, entitled *The Urban Teacher Initiative* will invite Freshman who are declared or undeclared Teacher Education majors to have a two-day, one night emersion experience at the site that will include a Reflection Seminar. It is asserted that this project will; 1) expose and retain interested Freshman, and 2) provide the opportunity to highlight and discuss the Dominican contributions that can be made to society, by becoming an urban educator. Proposal #2, a Human Issues proposal, will, if approved, allow Human Issues students to have a similar experience, at a different Chicago Housing Authority site. Finally, conversations are emerging to potentially work with our recent Mazuchelli Award Recipient to offer outreach and extension Graduate courses to the Perspectives Schools Project that she leads. If this occurs, Dr. Holub will use the self-determination curriculum with those teachers interested and the candidates (Perspectives School teachers) will earn Edgewood Graduate credit for enrolling.

For further information, please contact Dr. Tom Holub at tholub@edgewood.edu.