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Bilingual College Preparation in Mount Vernon, Ohio: A Community Based Learning Project with the Salvation Army

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Bilingual College Preparation in Mount Vernon, Ohio

A Community Based Learning Project with the Salvation Army

Andres Herrera, Alexa McElroy, Bridget Murdoch, Mary Sturgis
Introduction to Chicano Studies, Fall 2015
Professor Clara Román-Odio
Situation at hand: **Demographics**

- **Knox County, Ohio**
  - Population: 61,167
  - Population (Mount Vernon): 16,788

- **Mount Vernon Median income (Annual)**
  - $35,162
  - Lower than state average ($48,000)

- **2010:**
  - only 1.8% Hispanic/Latino

- **Number has grown, but resources remain scarce**
  - Partially lack of knowledge

- **LiRA project as response**
  - Increase awareness
  - What does the community need in return?
Demographics: Mount Vernon High School

- **Hispanic students represent the smallest ethnic group** at this school and have achieved the **lowest level of math and reading proficiency** out of the two ethnic groups represented at this school.

- **Mount Vernon High School Testing Statistics**
  - Average SAT Score: 1652
  - Average ACT Composite Score: 22
Importance of Standardized Testing in College Admissions

- Many sources believe that the importance of standardized testing is becoming less important in the College admissions process.
- Many colleges and universities still require at least one.
Access to Resources

● Direct correlation between SAT score and affluence
● Latino students struggling with language proficiency are at even higher disadvantage.
● **Lack of resources** in Knox County schools
  ○ Difficult to accommodate ESL students
  ○ Very few college counselors to guide students through the college admissions process.
We want our kids to go to
CBL Project

- Community Based Learning Project
  - Engagement with the surrounding community
  - Introduction to Chicano Studies course
  - Part of growing movement within Kenyon towards experiential learning

- Team members
  - Mary Sturgis
  - Alexa McElroy
  - Bridget Murdoch
  - Andres Herrera

- Journals
  - Offer an opportunity to reflect

- Curricula Development
  - Plays a key role in program development
Objectives

● Boost our students’ test scores
  ○ ACT/SAT
  ○ Reading and proficiency

● Guide them through the college admissions process.
  ○ Test prep
  ○ Researching colleges
  ○ Applying for financial aid/ scholarships

● Academic Empowerment
  ○ Collaboration with peers
  ○ Interactive engagement
Memorandum of Understanding

An agreement to a Partnership.

A way of establishing expectations from both parties.

Note: All of the Memorandum of Understanding was written by Professor Clara Roman-Odio for the purposes of this project.

This presentation borrows and adapts from this document.
Purpose

“As a Kenyon College and Salvation Army of Mount Vernon Partnership, we will work together to enrich and support the *Latino Youth Prep-College* program to be held twice per week at the Salvation Army from October 7, 2015 to April 22, 2016. “ (Roman-Odio, 1)

- orientation session
- 30 hours during the semester
- I commit to help participating Latino youth to improve their verbal and math skills in preparation for the ACT and SAT exams.
- scheduling meetings in a timely manner.
- open lines of communication
- communicate immediately to the Kenyon faculty any problems beyond our ability to manage
Reciprocal Expectations

The Salvation Army will provide:

- A student orientation about the nature of the work or the need to be addressed
- Student supervision and support with teaching materials targeting relevant skills
- A system for tracking hours of service
- Assessment of student work and outcome (exit evaluation)
- Assessment of the impact the educational intervention has on Salvation Army students
- A mechanism for Kenyon student to provide feedback to the school
Kenyon’s Contribution

- Commitment to certain number of hours per week or hours per project
- Student supervision by faculty member
- A system for tracking hours of service
- Assessment of the impact the program has on Kenyon students
- A faculty meeting every six months to open and close each semester session’s projects
- A mechanism for the school to provide feedback to the student and faculty member.

Kenyon students are expected to:

- Perform their service learning work to the best of their ability
- Follow the Salvation Army’s policies, procedures, and standards
- Meet time commitments and give reasonable notice if unable to attend
Partnership with Salvation Army

- Lt. “Gigi” Adriana Gonzalez-Cottrell
  - newer to the Salvation Army
  - our main point of contact
- Kaitlin
  - curricula developer for the Salvation Army
  - teaching experience
Facilities and Resources

- Salvation Army
  - multi-purpose spaces
  - computer lab
  - small classrooms (15 student maximum)
  - overcrowding during afterschool hours

- Resources
  - printing at Kenyon
    - bound curricula at end of trial period
  - lack of other materials
    - pens, paper
    - college prep books for students
Overview of Curricula Development: Key Components

- Development of vocabulary
  - Basic and advanced
- Reading comprehension
- Practice test-taking
  - Timed practice tests
  - Learn test-taking strategies
- Grammar and essay writing
  - Components of essay (intro, thesis, etc.)
  - Forming and explaining argument
The SAT

- Aptitude Test
- Mathematics
- Critical Reading
- Writing

Benefits of Preparation

- Vocabulary
- Testing Rules and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
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<td>American Indian</td>
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<td>460</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ACT

- Achievement Test
- English
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Science

Benefits of Preparation

- Test taking strategies are applicable to classroom skills
- Learning how “to test”
Specific Challenges with the SAT/ACT

- Inequality in access to resources
- Vocabulary-building strategies
- Overall literacy and reading comprehension
- Parent involvement in the process
Our (Working) Solutions for SAT/ACT Preparation

- Role of KILM Techniques
- Individualized Attention
- Community building
- Bilingualism as a tool for success
- Parent inclusion
- Goal setting
- Repetition
- Application of strategies to broader academic achievement
1. Pair share to come up with definitions for the following terms in your own words. Then, the entire class will define them in a group. Recap in Spanish.
   a. Scientific Method
   b. X-Axis
   c. Y-Axis
   d. Hypothesis
   e. Thesis

2. Pair an older student with a younger one. Read over the provided ACT Science Section. Then, the entire class will talk through the activity in a group. Recap in Spanish.
   a. Define any words you do not know using context clues.
   c. Talk through each question using supporting material from the text. Why is the answer false? Why is the answer true?
Sample Lesson Plan: SAT Writing

1. Read the question. Come up with your own answer.

   2. There is no doubt that Larry is a genuine ________: he excels at
telling stories that fascinate his listeners.

2. Look at the answers. Are there any words
   that are synonyms? How would you define
each word? Do any of the words sound like
   a word in Spanish?

   (A) braggart  (B) dilettante  (C) pilferer
   (D) prevaricator  (E) raconteur

   A braggart may or may not excel at telling stories and may
   actually annoy listeners.
   A dilettante is someone who dabbles at a career or hobby and
   so may not excel at anything.
   A pilferer steals repeatedly, in small quantities; this has
   nothing to do with storytelling.
   A prevaricator tells lies, but not necessarily in an
   accomplished or fascinating way; and the sentence refers to
   stories, not lies.

   You should choose the word that best fits the meaning of
   the sentence as a whole, and only choice (E) does so.

   Correct answer: (E) / Difficulty level: Hard
Who is this serving?

- Kids between 6th-12th grade
  - Students from families with no college graduates
  - Lower income
  - Struggle academically in local school system
  - Motivated students
How do we get parents on the same page?

- Open forum discussion with student leaders
- First generation latino student Q&A session
- Sitting in on prep sessions
- Maintain open communication
  - Email, phone, etc.
Prospective Publicity

- Continue partnership with Salvation Army
  - Advertise the program all year

- Kenyon advertising the program
  - Increase number of volunteers
  - Increase awareness of need

- Connect with high schools and libraries
What does this look like in 5 years?

1. Program run in conjunction with Kenyon students [Spanish speakers] and the Salvation Army.
2. Successful curriculum [quantifiably measured] distributed to Latino/a students, public libraries, institutions of higher learning, and high schools.
3. Larger Kenyon partnership with Salvation Army: bilingual child and young-adult mentorship, ESL, Bilingual GED Preparation for adults
Conclusion and Further Questions

- The program will provide students a sense of empowerment.
- The program will provide current and future high school students the means for academic success.
- Incorporate a greater portion of the community within the program.
- How will the program lead to a greater empowerment of the overall Latino community in Mount Vernon?
- Will the program be enough to ensure that the Latino community continue to have access to education and achieve academic success?
- Is the program a viable way to reform the current educational and economic systems in the area so that they include the Latino community?
First slide:

Second Slide:

Third Slide:

Fourth Slide:

Fifth & Sixth Slide:
Citations (Continued)

7th Slide: [http://campuspartners.osu.edu/assets/images/ohio-state-university.jpg](http://campuspartners.osu.edu/assets/images/ohio-state-university.jpg) (OSU Campus)

(wooster) [http://www.centralfarm.com/user/files/photos/wooster-campus.jpg](http://www.centralfarm.com/user/files/photos/wooster-campus.jpg)

[http://catalog.oberlin.edu/mime/media/33/3/cataloghomeimage.jpg](http://catalog.oberlin.edu/mime/media/33/3/cataloghomeimage.jpg) (Oberlin)

(Kent State) [https://du1ux2871uqv.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/styles/huge/public/administrative-group/DA50_038_0.jpg?itok=Rlyuay8O](https://du1ux2871uqv.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/styles/huge/public/administrative-group/DA50_038_0.jpg?itok=Rlyuay8O)

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(miami u) [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/62/Muohioharrison.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/62/Muohioharrison.jpg)

8th Slide: http://www.mvnu.edu/MtVernon/photos/2.jpg (Mt. Vernon sign)

(kenyon sign) http://www.kenyon.edu/files/middlepath/sign.jpg


22nd Slide: SAT Practice Test. 2012.