

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PREK-12 OUTREACH PROJECTS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2013

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New Tech Global Issues All-School Project (GIASP)

2

Purpose: To provide an intense learning experience, challenging New Tech high school student teams to create solutions to global issues.

- **School leadership preparation**
 - CSGC staff and school educators from five different New Tech schools in Indiana, Michigan, and Texas
- **Project weeks**
 - AY 1112: Five different project weeks, one at each participating New Tech school
 - Week of deep study and research on a global issue, culminating in student team presentations about their team solutions to the issue
 - Intended learning outcome: Each student will develop a better understanding of one global issue from local and global perspectives, enough to propose a possible solution for one aspect of that global issue

Assessing the Impact of GIASP

3

Benefits

- Determine strengths & weaknesses of project
- Solicit new ideas to improve & enhance project
- Report to funders & other stakeholders

Challenges

- Coordination with evaluator
- Coordination with 5 schools in 5 different weeks & time zones
- Accessing teachers and students through principal
- All communications
- Technical difficulties
- Survey completion rates

Bridges: Children, Languages, World

4

Purpose: To bring Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) to young learners in the community while offering professional development opportunities to IU students.

❑ 2007: Pilot Project in Arabic started

- Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies graduate student starts Alef Ba as community partnership with Monroe County Public Library and IU Department of Near Eastern Languages and Culture, bringing early Arabic learning to pre-school children using IU student instructors

❑ 2010: Bridges Project Created/Expands

- “Bridges” Project created, based on Alef Ba concept; leadership team: Project Coordinator, Language Coordinator, student Intern; supported by CSGC
- Multiple new partners join project, including other IU NRCs for Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, Middle East, Russia/East Europe, academic departments, School of Education, Honors College, International Affairs Office
- Additional languages: Chinese, Dari, Mongolian, Russian, Swahili, Zulu
- New community sites include day care facility, church pre-school, charter school, community centers, & CSGC

Assessing the Impact of Bridges

5

Benefits

- Determine what works & what does not
- Identify strategies to strengthen, expand & or limit project growth
- Evaluate structure, organization, communication, impact, and effectiveness
- Determine continued viability
- Demonstrate efficacy to supporters and funders

Challenges

- Multiple stakeholders : instructors, volunteers, children, parents, institutional, & community partners
- Different classes and locations
- Varied languages, levels, ages, & parental participation
- Time intensive to coordinate in-person assessment of instruction
- Online feedback survey response rate low
- Available funding

Evaluating Outreach Programs

6

Evaluation Tools

- **What?**
 - ▣ Online survey instruments developed specifically for each outreach project
- **Why?**
 - ▣ Most appropriate method to gather data
- **When?**
 - ▣ Pre/Post of multiple cohorts for New Tech
 - ▣ Impact for Bridges
- **How?**
 - ▣ Dedicated survey software

Evaluating Outreach Programs

7

Benefits

- Working directly with NRC & project staff
- Rich data collected from different stakeholders
- Online versus paper

Challenges

- Time intensive development
- Communication with schools & constituents
- Technical difficulties
- Funding

Evaluating Outreach Programs

8

Solutions

- ❑ Build 'in-house' knowledge
- ❑ Establish and maintain clear lines of communication with project staff
- ❑ Evaluation center to have staff on hand, should technical difficulties arise
- ❑ For schools, provide technical contact other than principal
- ❑ Strategies to increase response rate