THE IMPACT OF A FIVE-WEEK RURAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

OSU | RURAL RENEWAL INITIATIVE

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WHAT IS THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY?

- When youth move to larger, more urban areas after high school, a severe strain is put on a rural community's resiliency and vitality (Hastings et al., 2011)

- Positive change within communities depends largely on engaging and empowering youth (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001)

- Although a local youth development program existed, its impact was largely unknown

BOMBER
Y.E.L.L.

Five-Week Leadership Development Program
in Frederick, Oklahoma

Community Volunteers
- Lance Bohannon
- Roxie Hill

10 Middle School Participants
- Average age of 13

STRUCTURE

3 days per week
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

AM
Open Discussion
American History and Current Events

PM

Community Activity
Service and Education

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- The questionnaire used for this study consisted of identifying the importance and competence levels of 67 employability skills, taken from the work of Robinson et al. (2007) on a four-point response scale

- The importance and competence constructs were analyzed using the Borich (1980) needs assessment model
  1. mean importance rating - mean competence rating = Discrepancy Score (DS)
  2. DS x mean importance rating = Weighted Discrepancy Score (WDS)
  3. Sum of WDS / number of respondents = Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS)

RESULTS - IMPORTANCE

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Problem Solving	2.61	2.85
Time Management	2.58	2.67
Risk Taking	2.55	2.78
Oral Communication	2.60	2.70
Written Communication	2.65	2.75
Interpersonal Relations	2.70	2.74
Managing Conflict	2.55	2.70
Leadership	2.22	2.56
Coordinating	2.45	2.65
Creativity	2.76	2.82
Vision	2.50	2.75
Ability to Conceptualize	2.70	2.73

0 = No Importance, 1 = Minor Importance, 2 = Moderate Importance, 3 = Major Importance

Problem Solving

Ranked the highest in importance (n = 2.85) for students.

Growth

Positive growth occurred in 12 of the 16 constructs after completion of the program (see Table.) The following constructs did not see growth:
- Decision-making
- Listening
- Lifelong Learning
- Motivation

Leadership

The program helped students realize the importance of leadership (MD = 0.34.)

RESULTS - COMPETENCE

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Problem Solving	2.19	2.23
Decision-making	1.92	2.07
Time Management	2.00	2.19
Risk Taking	1.83	1.95
Oral Communication	1.78	2.22
Written Communication	1.93	2.03
Managing Conflict	1.90	2.35
Leadership	2.06	2.08
Coordinating	1.70	1.90
Vision	1.85	1.90
Ability to Conceptualize	1.87	2.07

0 = No Competence, 1 = Minor Competence, 2 = Moderate Competence, 3 = Major Competence

Most Competent

Students felt the most competent in listening skills (n = 2.39) and lifelong learning (n = 2.40) after the completion of the program.

Improvement

Students felt the most change in competence for oral communication (MD = 0.44) and managing conflict (MD = 0.45.)

Growth

Positive growth occurred in 11 of the 16 constructs after completion of the program (see Table.) Five constructs did not see improvement in competence.
- Listening
- Interpersonal Relations
- Creativity, Innovation and Change
- Lifelong Learning
- Motivation

FINDINGS

Employability Skill Construct	MWDS[a]
1. Time Management	1.15
2. Creativity	1.10
3. Motivation	0.98
4. Risk Taking	0.93
5. Problem Solving	0.88
6. Decision-making	0.85
7. Written Communication	0.80
8. Interpersonal Relations	0.77
9. Oral Communication	0.56
10. Ability to Conceptualize	0.55
11. Leadership and Influence	0.47
11. Visioning	0.47
12. Coordinating	0.40
13. Lifelong Learning	0.33
14. Managing Conflict	0.19
15. Listening	0.10

[a]Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score

Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score

- A MWDS was calculated for each employability skill construct (sum of weighted discrepancy scores / number of respondents)

- Items with high discrepancy scores indicate areas in need of curriculum enhancement and improvement

- Time management, creativity, motivation and risk taking have the greatest need for curriculum improvement

- Listening and managing conflict have a low need for curriculum improvement

CONCLUSION

Implementation:
- The evaluation used for this study is also being used in Big Topics
- This evaluation could be implemented in almost any program

Recommendations:
- The five-week program should continue to be taught with extra emphasis in time management and creativity

Conclusions:
- Importance scores rank higher than competence scores (Radhakrishna & Bruening, 1994, Robinson et al., 2007)
- A single, five-week program cannot serve as the only development for students