



Case Study

Youth Development Collaborative Pilot – The Morino Institute

Overview

Client

The Morino Institute funded and coordinated the Youth Development Collaborative Pilot which served as a foundation for the current YouthLearn initiative. Staff from over 15 community-based, youth-serving organizations in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia attended the workshops held at the Perry School Community Services Center in Washington DC's North Capitol neighborhood.

Goals and Objectives

To expose youth program staff to teaching and curriculum development strategies for technology-enriched, out-of-school learning programs.

Challenges

Participants have minimal to no formal training on how children and youth learn including strategies and techniques as well as the larger picture of how we teach for understanding.

Action

Pedagogical Strategies

Participants required training in teaching and leadership skills—how to work with children in a group, design activities, set up program space—which was delivered in a format that reflects the real-life experience of working with children. Strategies helped students surface prior knowledge and increase comprehension. Strategies included Visual Mapping, Structured Inquiry, Panoramic Books, and Collaborative Thinking Exercises. The workshops simulated a child's classroom environment and included demonstration lessons with children and youth. Staff engaged in hands-on exercises, shared tools and materials, and discussed the activities in the same manner that children and youth would in their respective learning centers. Training in software and Internet skills incorporate research into child development concepts, teaching techniques and curriculum development strategies.

Techniques

The workshops included:

- regular exercises for short term collaboration and long term community building for the participants;
- how we use varied groupings of students effectively;
- modeling with students including the metacognition (the act of thinking about thinking), thinking methods, and how we use our tools; and
- assessing and designing our physical environment for optimum use.

Outcomes

Results

By shifting the focus away from technology to teaching strategies and techniques, we had a much better understanding of how to implement technology as a tool.

Continuing Results

Group work among the participants provided an opportunity to meet and share ideas and experiences. They established a listserv which became the foundation for the current international YouthLearn listserv and website. The site lists resources and tools to support out of school programs with learning programs to enhance technology.

Lessons Learned

The YDC workshops were documented by:

- a professional videographer,
- a reporter, and
- a stenographer.

Despite excellent documentation of the process, a lack of vision for how to use such resources kept them from being used more formally.

