

## **Awards for Innovation Final Report**

### **Title of Research Study:**

Exploring Career Pathways through Sustainability Service-Learning Projects

### **Investigator, Institution:**

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### **Strand Project Addressed**

Northern Illinois University's School of Family, Consumer and Nutrition Sciences addressed the strand of Effective Instructional Strategies for Delivery of the Sixteen Career Clusters for CTE.

### **Overview of Research Study**

The purpose of the project was to develop service learning projects that were sustainability-focused for career exploration that also integrated the career cluster framework. The outcome of the project produced an instructional manual that outlines instructions for 12 service learning projects that also includes how to highlight project, alignment to a career cluster, instructional strategies (connects project within classroom for career exploration), and related skill sets [for each project]. The instructional manual was researched, developed, and implemented by an interdisciplinary collaboration of teachers.

### **Objectives/Research Questions**

- a. Collaboration of 1 CTE teacher and 2 STEM teachers in researching and developing:
  - i. 12 service learning projects for secondary students that promote sustainability that can be implemented within the school or community
  - ii. instructional materials and strategies
  - iii. an instructional manual detailing i. and ii. from above
- b. Implement a service learning project in an Illinois Public High School Consumer Education course taught by a CTE teacher\*

*A. and B. Objectives:* An instructional manual was researched, developed, and implemented by an interdisciplinary collaboration of teachers. The manual outlines 12 service learning projects that promotes sustainability as well as how to highlight each project, alignment to a career

cluster, instructional strategies (connects project within classroom for career exploration), and related skill sets [for each project]. One Family and Consumer Sciences teacher and one Cooperative Work Training teacher from Community High School in West Chicago, IL each implemented a service learning project within their classes.

- c. Assess instructional effectiveness
- d. Answer the three proposed research questions

*C. and D. Objectives:* The primary investigator assessed the instructional effectiveness by interviewing both the teachers and five randomly selected students at the completion of the implemented service learning project. The interview questions were based on the proposed research questions for this research project. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. In summary, both the teachers and students concluded that the sustainability service learning projects were an effective instructional method for promoting career exploration.

- e. Disseminate instructional materials to CTE educators.

*E. Objective:* The instructional manuals were burned onto CDs. The CDs were disseminated at conferences, provided to teacher education programs, as well as given to colleagues and professionals in the field of career and technical education.

- f. Disseminate research data by submitting one manuscript to a professional journal and one presentation at the 2010 Connections Conference.

*F. Objective:* A manuscript titled: *Careers: Going Green While Doing Good* was submitted to Techniques as well as a presentation at the 2010 Connections Conference.

### **Project Deliverables**

- Instructional manual CDs distributed at the 2010 Connections Conference and at the 2010 IACTE/IFACSTA Conference and will be distributed at the ACTE National Conference (2010 December).
- Presentations: 1) 2010 Connections Conference; 2) 2010 IACTE/IFACSTA; and 3) accepted presentation at the ACTE National Conference (2010 December).