

Proposal Summary

The Enka High Teacher Cadets and Future Teachers of America members will be reading aloud to children after school every second and fourth Thursday of the month. We will collaborate with a Western Carolina University faculty member to develop the skills needed for the high school students to engage younger children in the reading of a story and refine strategies for helping the children comprehend the various aspects of the story. After the story is completed, the high school students will engage the elementary and middle school children in activities that help further develop the children's literacy skills and reading comprehension. This will be a service to all of the students as the older students gain practical experience working with younger students and the younger students will be assisted in developing literacy skills. The grant money will allow us to purchase books, art and craft supplies, games and puzzles for literacy skills development and refreshments for the children that attend this afterschool program.

Budget

As we discussed books that would be appropriate for this activity, the students decided that it would be beneficial to have input from the children as to which books they might enjoy hearing and they would solicit the advice of the WCU faculty member for recommendations as well. Books that seemed appropriate ranged in cost from \$5.99 to \$14.99. Although we cannot specify the exact cost of the books since we've yet to select them, we can estimate the cost of elementary books at \$200.00 and middle school books at \$200.00. We will also seek advice from our WCU partner as to what activities might enhance reading comprehension and/or serve to engage the children in literacy development. We will ask for \$200.00 for art and craft supplies, games, and puzzles that meet this need. Finally, since this is an afterschool service project, we would like to be able to serve the children juice and a couple of cookies each week. We've reserved \$100.00 of the grant money for this purpose.

\$200.00 – Elementary Age Appropriate Books

\$200.00 – Middle School Age Appropriate Books

\$200.00 – Supplies for Literacy Activities

\$100.00 – Refreshments for Children

\$700.00 – Total Amount Requested

Project Description

The Enka High Teacher Cadets and Future Teachers of America members will be reading aloud to children after school every second and fourth Thursday of the month. The rationale for this project is two-fold: 1) There is a need for the Teacher Cadets and FTA members to begin interacting with younger students so that they can gain experience working with children in a safe, comfortable, and encouraging environment and learn to incorporate techniques discussed in the Teacher Cadet course/WCU sessions before they are asked to read aloud to students in an unfamiliar classroom, possibly without the necessary skills needed to keep the students' attention or maintain order. 2) Additionally, the elementary and middle school students will hopefully gain some literacy skills, be exposed to new vocabulary and concepts, and have individual attention from older students which might inspire them to become more engaged and productive students themselves.

We will collaborate with a Western Carolina University faculty member to develop the skills needed for the high school students to engage younger children in the reading of a story. We would like for a university staff member come to our school one afternoon and conduct a workshop for our Teacher Cadets and FTA members on successful techniques for reading aloud to children. We would ask that skills such as selecting an appropriate book, gaining the children's attention as they introduce the book, reading with expression, questioning students for enhanced story comprehension, and refining strategies for helping the children comprehend the various aspects of the story be addressed. We would ask for suggestions of activities, games, puzzles, etc., that the high school students might employ after the story is completed to help further develop the children's literacy skills and reading comprehension. We would also ask that our WCU liaison be available to answer questions (via e-mail) that might arise after practicing some of the literacy developing techniques.

Several 21st Century skills are addressed by these activities, not the least is thinking critically about the selection of books and which topics may be most beneficial to the audience at hand, reflecting upon which

activities were most successful in attaining their goals of literacy development and comprehension, and working as a team to best manage the behavior and attention of the younger students.

The money awarded by this grant will be used to establish a small collection of books so that this project, if successful, may continue for several years. With books available, we might be able to extend this project to working with students in classes or act upon suggestions of the elementary teachers. Our vision is to begin with this small project and possibly collaborate with, not only university personnel, but elementary teachers as well, for a vertical alignment of literacy goals –elementary through college level.

We will evaluate the effectiveness of this project by the number of elementary/middle school students who return each week and by assessing the comments they make throughout the year. We will ask parents if they can determine any positive outcomes of the child's experience of working with high school students. We will also survey the Teacher Cadets and FTA members to ascertain specific skills they have developed and to determine whether or not they now feel more prepared to enter an elementary classroom for the purpose of leading students in an activity or lesson.

The grant funds are critical to developing a small collection of books that can be used for this project and possibly extending the ideas brought forth by collaboration of various parties. Without the grant money, we may read books brought in by club members, but the skills developed by selecting appropriate books and the critical analysis of how this book and the activities designed to go along with it will be lost. With budget cuts, teachers do not have excess paper, markers, or other supplies to lend to us, therefore we would be unable to do many of the post-reading activities also. We feel that the post-reading time spent with the children is essential because this will allow the Teacher Cadets and FTA members to interact less formally with the children and assess how well the child comprehended the story, and possibly determine future avenues for helping the individual child.

Sandy Ballinger

From: Dianne Chadwick
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 11:43 AM
To: Laura roberts
Cc: Sandy Ballinger
Subject: SUTEP Grant Proposal

Good Morning, Laura,

After reading the description of your grant proposal, I fully support your project. In addition to focusing on literacy, your proposal also addresses 21st Century including critical thinking and collaborative learning. The activities you propose will be not only enjoyable for young students with whom your Cadets will work, but also the young readers will benefit from engagement strategies, questioning techniques, and activities developed by your Cadets. Furthermore, the literacy skills your Cadets will learn and practice will enhance not only their future as teachers but also as parents. This project will have long-lasting impact on your Teacher Cadets and their students.

Sincerely,

Dianne H. Chadwick, Teacher Recruitment and Retention
Teacher Recruitment, Advising, and Career Support (TRACS)
91 Killian Lane, Room 232
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Phone: 828.227.3307
FAX: 828.227.7315
Email: dchadwick@email.wcu.edu