SUTEP Partnership Grants 2011-2012
Project Report

Name: Laura Roberts

Project Title: Enka High School FTA Story Time

Position: Enka High Teacher/ Teacher Cadet Coordinator/ FTA Sponsor

School: Enka High School

Phone: 828-670-5000

School address: 475 Enka Lake Road

City and Zip Code: Candler, NC

School System: Buncombe County Schools

1. Who was/were your WCU project partner/s? Approximately how much time did they spend working on the project with you? Please describe how this partnership contributed to the goals of your project.

Dr. Roya Scales spent about 5 hours on our project. She met with the high school students in the fall to demonstrate effective reading techniques, discuss comprehension strategies and recommend appropriate reading material. Dr. Scales also suggested ways for the high school students to better engage younger children in the reading of a story and refine strategies for helping the children comprehend the various aspects of the story, such as having the children predict what might happen, pointing out various aspects of the illustrations, or asking the children if they had a similar experience they could relate to the story. She then remained in contact with us via e-mail to see how we were progressing with our project and to find out if we had any questions she could answer for us.

2. Did you accomplish your project goals? Please explain how you evaluated the project’s success.

We feel that we’ve had a successful project judging by the positive response of the children, adults, and the high school students that were involved. The high school students have also indicated that they feel better prepared to read to larger classes in the elementary schools when they do their field experience. The elementary teachers have been very complimentary of the poise and effectiveness the high school students have demonstrated on the occasions they have had to interact with elementary students at their school. (For example, they went to the elementary school to read aloud to the young students for Dr. Suess’s birthday celebration)
3. How were the grant funds used? Please provide an itemized list of expenditures, and copies of purchase orders/receipts or other relevant documents that show that the funds were spent as specified in the grant proposal.

We used the grant money to purchase about 50 books, most of which were elementary books since the middle school children were not receptive to efforts to separate them for more advanced literature. We also purchased art and craft supplies, games and puzzles for literacy skills development and refreshments for the children that attended this afterschool program. Since we did not spend as much on refreshments as we had planned, we used some of the money to buy photo supplies to make a portfolio to document our project.

Books = $421.96
Art/Craft Supplies = $115.65 (plus)
Games = $51.51
Photo Supplies = $65.91
Refreshments $44.97
Summary Report

The Enka High Teacher Cadets and Future Teachers of America members held a story time on Thursday afternoons for the children of the faculty and staff members at Enka High School. The ages of the children ranged from 2 years old to 7th grade. Each week the number of children in attendance varied from three to ten, with three to six high school students leading the activities. Dr. Roya Scales, the literacy expert at Western Carolina University, met with the high school students in the fall to demonstrate effective reading techniques, discuss comprehension strategies and recommend appropriate reading material. Dr. Scales also suggested ways for the high school students to better engage younger children in the reading of a story and refine strategies for helping the children comprehend the various aspects of the story, such as having the children predict what might happen, pointing out various aspects of the illustrations, or asking the children if they had a similar experience they could relate to the story. After the story, the high school students engaged the elementary and middle school children in activities that help further develop the children’s literacy skills and comprehension, such as word games, puzzles, or crafts that related to some aspect of the story.

One surprising revelation was that the middle school students did not want to participate when we tried to separate them for a more advanced story, but would gladly join the younger children in the elementary story time. So, we let them stay together and found that the older children actually served as good role models for active listening and they encouraged the younger children by emulating the high school students in asking the younger students questions about the story or helping them with their craft, game or puzzle. They seemed to view themselves as leaders in the activities instead of participants (since we had all students - pre-school to high school- sit in the floor for the activities). We were also surprised by how popular the program became. Children and adults alike would stop by to find out when the next story time would be.

This was a great opportunity for the high school students who gained practical experience working with younger students and for the younger students who developed literacy and social skills. Since we now have a supply of books, we hope to continue this project for the next several years.