

DEGREE PROJECT ABSTRACT

Teaching Environmental/STEM College Access Curriculum in Two Western Washington Title I Elementary Schools

This study attempts to answer the question: What are the best methods for designing Environmental/STEM College Access Curriculum for Title I Classrooms? Participants were 98 5th-graders in classes at two Title I schools. The treatment was 15 hours of College Access Curriculum: 7 hours occurred at the North Cascades Institute's Mountain School, eight hours in the students' regular classrooms. Western Washington University students received training to administer the curriculum as coaches. Data were gathered from elementary students (pre- and post-program surveys, retrospective questionnaire and open-ended question), coaches (essays and teacher evaluations) and teachers (feedback form).

Data gathered from elementary students yielded little reliable or conclusive data to answer the initial question. Coach and teacher data were used to create recommendations for integrating new curriculum into a multi-program project.

The six recommendations were:

1. Meet with key people from each program at the beginning of the project to understand their plan.
2. Obtain as much information about each program as possible by asking for schedules, syllabi and any other available program documents.
3. Attend at least one day observing critical integration points of each program.
4. Understand the demographics of the people being served by each program.
5. Develop a rough draft of key curricular components. Meet with each program again to make sure that everyone understands their involvement to ensure buy-in of the time and space needed for integration.
6. Confirm expectations for each program by circulating a document that contains the final curriculum and responsibilities to be signed and returned.