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Improving Literacy in the Miami Valley

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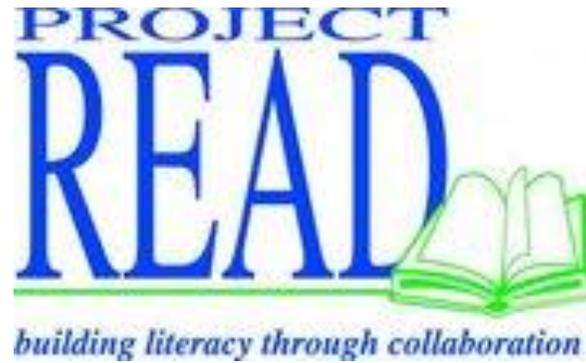
Improving Literacy in the Miami Valley
 A Social Justice Learning and Living Cohort Community Project
 Presenter: Emily Pannier
 Advisors: Lori Phillips Young and Margaret Strain

Introduction

The Social Justice Sophomore Learning and Living Cohort’s mission is to improve literacy in the Miami Valley. As a member of the cohort, I was trained to tutor adults by the non-profit organization Project READ. Project READ is a truly inspiring organization whose mission is to build skilled workers, strong families, and healthy communities. I was placed in an adult class in Kettering Ohio where students were from countries such as Mexico, Russia and Iraq. All of the students were learning English for the first time most of them knew very little to no English when they moved to the United States. Some students wanted to learn better English skills in order to find a job and others just wanted to be able to communicate with other English speakers. I worked as an assistant to Holly Elkins-Lopez, a full time Project Read teacher. I assisted her by giving students more individualized assistance. I was able to help the students sound out words, build vocabulary and understand grammar. I got the opportunity to learn and understand other people’s culture through volunteering. I also connected this experience with the Marianist ideals of lead, learn, and serve by leading others in becoming literate in the English Language, learning about other cultures and serving my community through tutoring. It was very rewarding to watch all the students make major progress in learning the English language. All of the students came so far from where they started and are still continuing to succeed.

Social Justice Mission Statement

- We are a Learning Living Community that
- Engages in a process of intellectual inquiry;
 - Productively negotiates and creates space for critical listening and the free exchange of ideas ;
 - Holistically integrates academic, residential, and co-curricular activities ;
 - Deploys the particular methodologies of the Humanities disciplines specifically those associated with the study of English, Philosophy, Religion and History;
 - Fosters an interdisciplinary approach to fundamental human concerns, e.g. what it mean to be human;
 - Focuses on apprehending and addressing issues of Social Justice, such as stewardship, solidarity with those different from us, commitment to the integrity and equality of all human life, and dedication to the common good; and
 - Encourages undergraduate research that is informed by the experience of service learning.



ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Project Read

Project Read has over 35 literacy programs and basic skill providers. There are over 80 different school and tutoring sites and so many people committed to helping improve literacy. This organization help so many people become literate and have a very dedicated staff. Holly Elkins-Lopez being a huge part of this staff. She is the one who trained me and was the teacher in the classroom I tutored in. She was an inspiring women whose passion were to help all the student learn and grow.

English for Speaker of Other Languages

I was tutoring students who spoke all types of language and were learning English for the first time. Most of them needed to learn English to get a Job. All them shared the goal of learning English to help them in the US. They all wanted to be able to communicate with other English speakers. I have never seen such a dedicated group that worked so hard in and out of the classroom to learn English.



What I Have Learned

I was able to take a lot from tutoring adults learning the English language. I was able to learn techniques on how to teach which with come in handy when I become a teacher. My passion is to help other which is why I was to be a teacher. I want the help student grow, learn and succeed and that is what I got to do through tutoring. I learned how to help students and feel the happiness it brings when I see them succeeding.