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"School" - Not Enough to Deal with the Real World;

How does informal learning benefit

school-to-work programs for out of school teens?

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ABSTRACT

How does informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens?

Andrea Williams

The large purpose of this paper was to better understand the need for community involvement in educating youths when designing career readiness programs while also keeping in mind that formal learning should work side by side with the natural learning process of students learn by doing. Information for this research was collected over a one year time period, at Vision in Focus Multi-Service Center, using focus groups, observations, interviews, published literature, surveys and site documents. Informal education was defined as a natural accompaniment to everyday life. The data revealed informal learning could create a range of learning environments which work to ensure that children meet high academic standards, develop a sense of civic duty and community connection and obtain the capability for lifelong learning. Research on benefits of informal learning for out of school teens in school to work programs indicates that educators must find ways to naturally blend informal and formal learning then they could create an appreciation for what students know and bring to their learning environments. Youth desire to be active participants in their learning by having a say and contributing to curriculum; with an appreciation being shown towards their diversities. They welcome new experiences in different settings other than formal education which allows for learning through examples and hands on experiences. Finally, youth are asking for community involvement in programs that offer education to help prepare them for employment; while communities are seeing the importance of that shared responsibility.

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INTRODUCTION

Vision in Focus, located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Flatbush Community in Brooklyn, New York, serves as a multi-service center that focuses on youth programs and is an umbrella for many other services. The Multi-Service Center consists of Aide to Seniors, Teach our Youth Support (T.O.Y.S.), Women and Male Support programs, and Outreach Services that include the distribution of Clothing, Food, Job referral, Shelter and Medicaid referrals, Counseling, and Recovery after Incarceration. All services are provided on and off site with a Project Director supervising each service and program.

A key service of the organization is Teach Our Youth Support. (T.O.Y.S.) which presently consists of a project director, an assistant, three parents, several youth counselors and active teenagers. As the project director for all youth programs and services at Vision in Focus, my main agenda is to provide alternate means of education, support and services for young people. We involve our youths in programs and activities that will increase their opportunities to become productive members of society. We encourage our youths to believe in themselves and constantly remind them they have something important and useful to contribute to the world in which they live. Some of the young people who participate in T.O.Y.S. are from Africa, Mexico and several Caribbean Islands. They are all from various cultural and economic backgrounds. The majority are children who reside in the surrounding (NYCHA) New York City Housing Authority.

Informal learning has been defined as a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non -formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning,

and so may well not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills. Community-based education is considered informal learning because the teaching is not done in formal educational settings such as schools. Community involvement in educating young people could create a range of learning environments that work to ensure that children meet high academic standards, develop a sense of civic duty and community connection, and realize their capacity for lifelong learning. When communities come together and share in this responsibility, collaboration is built not just with the youths involved but also with parents and schools. Hull &Greeno (2003) tell us that community based organizations can serve a real and meaningful purpose because learning can be combined with fun, and precisely because the programs do not view themselves as supplementary to schools, but rather as alternative sites for different kinds of learning.

Informal learning has recently taken on significance, especially when it comes to working with youth who for the most part have not experienced success in formal educational settings. I was recently reminded of this important fact when a parent came to us and asked what educational services we provide to out of school teens. We told her about the counseling and workshops we provide, but there was nothing we were able to offer that included education and work readiness services. We have at least fourteen out of school teenagers involved in our other programs. Some participate in a GED program that, unfortunately, does not offer career readiness skills; and some take part in the youth counseling program, but they do not receive mentoring for career readiness and planning. After hearing the parent's concerns, I realized that the Youth Education, Trade & Career

Program not only needed to be redesigned, but also that it needed to be fully

implemented.

The Youth Education, Trade & Career Program was initially designed in 2009 to teach

carpentry, masonry, and typing to local teens in the community. Later it was supposed to

be extended to include plumbing and cooking. It was never implemented, in part because

it needed to be redesigned to include community involvement. Although the T.O.Y.S

staff had a strong desire to implement the program, commitment on the part of

community members was not strongly present.

After speaking with local business owners and community leaders, I realized that this

indeed needed to become a community effort. I was watching young people "hanging

out" as they say, with no intentions of planning for their future. In addition, many

teenagers have shared with me that college is not an option for them; as a result, they do

not see what else is available or what other alternatives they have.

The larger purpose of my research project is to better understand ways our organization

can develop community involvement in educating out of school teens. This knowledge

would help improve the relationship between community business members and teens by

(a) having community members assume responsibility as mentors and providers of

career/trade internships and (b) letting teens see that hard work, dedication, and learning

can help them achieve their goals.

I had certain assumptions going into this study. One was that I wanted the research to

support the creation of additional opportunities – pathways and bridges -- for learning

that would benefit all who became involved. Community organizations could recognize

that they are in the learning business and could share the responsibility for providing young people with the career and life skills they need to transition into adulthood. "Free-choice learning, a new paradigm for the learning that youth and their families engage in outside school, can play an important role in the healthy development of youth, families, and communities" (Dierking, Falk, 2003). After speaking with several community business owners, parents, and youth, I became interested in finding out what kinds of collaboration could be developed among all three groups that would allow for "free-choice" and informal learning. Another assumption was that civic, human services, and faith-based nonprofit organizations are becoming more involved in serving youth. These organizations are among the many that are increasing their capacity to offer formal and informal learning opportunities that not only supplement and complement school curricula but also reach out to students who have left the formal K–12 system. This work is important to me. As a result of my research, it is my intention to redesign the Youth Education, Trade and Career Program. I want out of school teens to be able to develop career readiness skills needed to become positive contributors to society. It is my desire for them to see that there are many ways to become successful.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on benefits of informal learning for out of school teens in school-to-work programs indicates that educators must find ways to naturally blend informal and formal learning; they must develop an appreciation for what students know and bring to their learning environments. Findings throughout the literature also indicate that informal learning contributes to a stronger sense of democracy because it allows students to have a say in their learning, hands on experience, and opportunities for learning by example. The third theme that emerged in the literature indicates that out of school teens who are transitioning into adulthood and are not career ready can, in fact, benefit from programs that extend beyond graduation; these can provide learning opportunities that support high school dropouts.

Educators must find ways to naturally blend informal and formal learning and to develop an appreciation for what students know and bring to their learning environments.

"In the past several years, researchers and teachers have sought to develop pedagogy that aligns classrooms more closely with the settings where people learn naturally, and, at the same time, to accomplish the academic goals of schooling" (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 173). The colonization of children's leisure is not being accomplished by schools alone. Parents who are concerned about safety and optimizing their children's opportunities often ask that they be placed in programs that improve school attendance, reduce the dropout rate, help children turn in more and better quality work, and assist children who need more time on task than others to learn the same material (Nocon& Cole, 2006). Francis Parker once argued, "The school should be a model home, a complete

community, and an embryonic democracy" (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 87). Nocon& Cole

(2006) describe two common assumptions within the field of education. The first is that

the ways people learn and develop differ, of necessity, depending on whether the context

for learning is formal or informal, within school settings or outside them. The second

assumption examines and challenges the hierarchical relationship that is commonly

assumed between school and non-school: that learning out-of-school should be

supplemental to learning in school. They argue for a reversal of this relationship: that

school should be understood as being supplementary to students' out-of-school worlds.

When school-based learning is connected with learning that takes place in the

community, there is a give and take between the two. In the process, learning inside the

school building during the school day can be transformed. In *Blurring the Lines*, the

authors discuss three strategies and benefits of blending informal and formal learning.

The first is that in order to enrich student learning during the school day, some schools

are forming partnerships with businesses, universities, artists, health and social service

agencies, and nonprofits to bring additional expertise and services into the school and to

offer off-campus opportunities for learning, work, service, and preventive supports. In

some cases, these partners are delegated responsibility for academic education through

charters or for educating students who have dropped out (Irby, Pittman &Tolman, 2003).

The second is in order to build alignment and connections with the other places where

students learn, schools are creating stronger partnerships with a broad array of

organizations: youth-serving organizations, civic and human services nonprofits, faith-

based organizations, recreation departments, libraries, museums, businesses, and others

that are supported by public and private dollars. These organizations complement the

schools' focus on academic competence by providing opportunities for civic, social, physical, vocational, and spiritual learning and engagement. Increasingly, they are not only sharing space with schools, but receiving referrals and creating joint ventures such as community schools.

Finally, to fulfill their core commitment to support academic achievement better, schools are building more connected and aligned learning experiences within the school day through new forms of accountability, as well as efforts to integrate curriculum and change instruction. In many ways, the standards movement has narrowed how schools think about learning, but it has also encouraged a new openness. Schools recognize that more time and resources are necessary to meet higher standards and that they will need the help of families and communities to do their job. They also recognize that creating environments in which young people feel safe, known, and respected is a precondition to learning (Irby, Pittman &Tolman, 2003).

Oakes and Lipton (2007) state that the goal of the 21st Century Community Learning Initiative is to provide youth, parents, and community members with engaging and healthy activities in safe community settings such as schools. Community schools began as local efforts to blur the distinction between communities and schools (Oakes and Lipton, 2007).

Learning by doing and participatory democracy are seen as benefits of informal learning in that they provide teens with opportunities for learning by example, having a say in their learning, and engaging in hands on experience.

"Nobody liberates anybody else, and nobody liberates themselves all alone. People liberate themselves in fellowship with each other; nobody educates anybody else. Nobody educates himself. People educate each other through their interactions of the world" (Freire,1970). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire states that individuals learn to cultivate their own growth through daily life situations that provide useful learning experiences, and that reality is built from the circumstances that give rise to the daily events of the learner's life. Freire sees learners becoming aware of reality in order to fight for their own emancipation.

Schugurensky (2001) describes learning by doing as the idea that the very act of participating in deliberation and decision making has a high pedagogical potential that can be traced back at least to Aristotle, and was clearly formulated by Rousseau. "As Carole Pateman (1970) noted in her classic book on participatory democracy, the central function of participation in Rousseau's theory is an educative one, using the term "education" in the same wide sense that permeates Freirean thought" (Schugurensky, 2001, p. 169). In *Optimizing out of school time*, free-choice learning is defined as learning that youth and their families engage in outside of school; the authors state that it can play an important role in the healthy development of youth, their families, and communities. It illustrates how informal learning provides opportunities for problem solving, self-regulation, and learning that goes beyond rigid standards (Dierking& Falk, 2003).

Out of school teens who are transitioning into adulthood and are not career ready can benefit from programs that extend beyond graduation; these can provide learning opportunities that support high school dropouts.

Readiness should be measured broadly with indicators that go beyond high school graduation and should be influenced by a broad range of systems and settings. If successful transitions are to be ensured, then support cannot stop when students leave high school either as graduates or dropouts. Ensuring success in adulthood requires broadening our thinking beyond the classroom, beyond the school day, beyond academics, and beyond the age 18. Given the changes in our economy and society, it requires that we conceptualize end goals that lie beyond high school graduation and college readiness. "One common worry among both theorists and practitioners is that dependence on formal schooling, even in light of all the current reform efforts, will leave students short of the experience needed to establish the expertise, critical skills, and confidence which are critical to the future world of work and to the altered family and citizenship demands of the world" (Heath, 2000, pg. 100).

METHODOLOGY

Context:

Information for this research was collected over a one year time period, at Vision in

Focus International Multi-Service Center, using focus groups, observations, interviews,

published literature and site documents. The names of all participants have been changed

for the purpose of anonymity. As a Multi-Service Center located in Brooklyn, New

York, there is a strong focus on youth programs and services including Teach Our Youth

Support. T.O.Y.S. presently consists of a project director, an assistant, three parents'

coordinators, several youth counselors, and active teenagers. As the project director for

all youth programs and services at Vision in Focus, my main agenda is to provide

alternate means of education, support and services for young people. Through quality

service experiences, youth can develop important skills such as critical thinking, a sense

of civic responsibility, and an increased sense of self efficacy that will be useful to them

throughout their college and work lives.

Data Collection

Phase I. Observations:

The purpose of my observation was to observe teens discussing school to work programs

and learning outside of school. Before the session the teens were informed that I would

be sitting in the back just to observe and would not be participating in the discussion. I

was unaware of the facilitator's exact topic and questions for tonight's discussion. The

observation took place during one of our weekly Youth Rap Sessions. The structure of

our rap sessions allow for teens to freely express how they feel about topics that they

select. They are encouraged to express how their feelings in a respectful manner without

risking any repercussions or scrutiny from their peers or staff. This is their time to be heard. There were seven people of color present, four girls ages 16, 17, 17, and 18; three boys ages 15, 16 and 17; and one experienced female youth counselor who facilitated the meeting. The session was held February 29, 2012 in the community room and lasted for an hour.

Phase II. Interviews:

On March 7, 2012, I had the opportunity to video record and transcribe about fifty minutes of an interview with three teens from Vision in Focus youth services. As a participator the data received was upfront and personal. Chrissy age 16 is Hispanic and has been a part of T.O.Y.S. for three years. Sasha age 17 is a person of color and has been a part of T.O.Y.S. from the age of eight. Julissa 18 years old is a person of color and has been a part of T.O.Y.S. for five years. The focus group took place on a Wednesday afternoon in the event dining room right before a weekly youth "rap" session. The purpose of this focus group was to learn how teens felt about learning outside of the formal school environment and what they felt was important in designing and implementing a community program providing services for out of school teens. A flip recording camera and tripod were used.

Phase III. Individual Interviews:

I had the privilege of meeting with a representative of the East New York Youth Empowerment organization on March 25, 2012. I was told over the phone that they valued the importance of building collaboration between community merchants and teens.

Mr. Gonzalez has been the Director of the East NY Youth Empowerment organization for the past five years and has witnessed many transitional changes. He is a young Hispanic man in his thirties and is very proud of the changes his organization has made in the community of East New York. Mr. Gonzalez shared his opinions about informal learning and discussed the experience of several community teens who had had the opportunity to shadow local merchants during a pilot program at his organization.

Phase IV. Informal Interviews:

During the course of my research I also had the privilege to conduct several informal interviews with members of the community. Ms. Peterson of Vision in Focus, Ms. Day of the Bedford Stuyvesant Renaissance Corporation, Mr. Greg of Greg's Plumbing, and Ms. Johnson of a local hair salon. I also gained insight from other educators at community-based organizations such as James Harvey from Community Partnerships Organization, and Ms. Joan Wynn. Data was also gathered through notes and a lecture by Sal Vascellero.

My study was guided by considering how informal education was defined, the benefits of informal education for out of school teens, and the ways in which informal education could be used for school to work transitions. As I concentrated on themes emerging from my data, I focused my attention specifically on the following question, "How does informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens?" Several interesting themes emerged.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

When analyzing the data, reflecting and analyzing my literature review, reading through my notes from observations, and transcribing interviews, three themes emerged. First, youth desire to be active participants in their learning by having a say and contributing to the curriculum; they also wanted to be appreciated for their qualities as diverse individuals. Second, new experiences in settings other than formal education allows for learning through examples and hands on experiences. Finally, youth are asking for community involvement in programs that offer education that helps prepare them for employment; in turn, community members are beginning to see the importance of that shared responsibility.

How does informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens?

All three themes focus on informal learning, building collaboration between community and youth, and creating learning opportunities (pathways and bridges) that lead to employment. The youth voices clearly declared that informal education can be beneficial if it provides them with education and skills that lead to employment. Studies conducted on the subject have proven the many benefits of community involvement in educating young people. One example is the Community Partnerships Organization run by James Harvey, whose strategy is based on a radical approach to improving urban educational opportunities by asking the question, "How can this community use all its assets to provide the best education for all our children?" (Harvey, 2012).

Free- choice learning is defined as giving students the opportunity to have a say in what they learn. Through free-choice learning, youth are given voices that allow their culture

and diversity to become part of the curriculum. They can also acquire and develop an understanding of a wide array of subjects, learn basic life skills such as how to earn an income and how to collaborate on projects and communicate with others, and develop a sense of leadership and responsibility (Dierking, L.D. & Falk, J. H., 2003).

In a focus group interview, eighteen years old Julissa spoke about the importance of her having a say in constructing curriculum. She expressed that young people desire to feel like participants in their own education. They want to have a say and be heard. During a youth "rap session," a seventeen years old male stated he was a physical learner and valued learning through hands on experiences. It allowed me to see that he was aware of how he learns and knew what works best for him. I heard other teens speak about being frustrated with learning that does not include their individuality.

The three young ladies in the focus group concentrated on how ways that the program should be less (i.e., differently) structured than school by providing opportunities for hands-on and experiential learning and avoiding textbooks and lectures. The following is an excerpt from the focus group:

> When asked if the Youth Education, Trade & Career program would be something they could benefit from Julissa said, "Yes! I think it will be a benefit cause it's not textbook learning but more hands on. {Before she could finish} Sasha: Exactly. Actual hands on is better. If you would go out into a different site & actually work in the site, you will learn, actually, personally I think you will learn better by doing then just telling me something. Chrissy: It's like bringing what's written alive and then it becomes more relevant to you. Julissa: You will feel more engaged and involved."

All three believed the program would allow them an opportunity to have a say in their education and to actually be a part of the structure of the learning. The idea that the very act of participating in deliberation and decision making has a high pedagogical potential can be traced back at least to Aristotle.

In an informal interview, Ms. Peterson, the facilitator, discussed using the community as a learning environment. She pointed out that youth are engaged and motivated by using the resources, challenges, and assets of the community as part of the core curriculum.   It shows an "appreciation for the various cultures and diversities that makes up a community," Ms. Peterson stated.

Julissa and Chrissy from the focus group discussed the importance of relevant content that allows them to feel more engaged. Youth show greater interest and academic success when content is meaningful and relevant and when it contributes to their sense of community connectedness and pride. When the community is used as text for instruction or even as tools within instruction, young people can become assets in their community, helping to solve specific problems in the community alongside adults. During the focus group, Julissa mentioned, "Having a say in what you learn and someone who shares your interest, is what will make a big difference in everything" (Julissa, 2012).

In an interview, Mr. Gonzalez discussed the benefits of informal learning while comparing it to formal learning. He said that informal learning was not relegated to a particular place and that it creates opportunities for using different learning styles. He suggested that informal learning is not necessarily planned or set up but is something that just happens.

> "Meaning, the knowledge youths obtain from their private, public, social and emotional development, as well as their culture that have taught them how to cope with realities and how to deal with situations such as problem solving, ummm just how to assimilate into society. All of this is informal learning to me. Formal education is just extremely too structure for this kind of development."

New experiences in different settings other than formal education that allow for learning through mentorship and hands on experiences are desired by teens.

During a focus group interview, three young women revealed their "yearnings." The girls yearn for experiences outside of school that offers them choices of what they would like and skills to fall back on. "I mean different areas for us to play, go on trips, and learn. Not all the time do we all want to do or learn the same thing. If we could have a choice of what we want to do, that would be cool," stated Sasha. She expressed her desire for learning that comes outside of the formal school knowledge.

They really focused on how learning through the program would be less structured than using textbooks and lectures, and they kept reiterating that they liked to learn through hands on experience and direct interaction. All three young women believed the program would allow them an opportunity to have a say in their education and to actually be a part of the structure of the learning. The following is an excerpt from the focus group:

> When asked if the Youth Education & Trade program would be something they could benefit from Julissa said, "Yes! I think it will be a benefit cause it's not textbook learning but more hands on. {Before she could finish} Sasha: Exactly. Actual hands on is better. If you would go out into a different site & actually work in the site, you will learn, actually, personally I think you will learn better by doing then just telling me something. Chrissy: It's like bringing what's written alive and then it becomes more relevant to you. Julissa: You will feel more engaged and involved."

Another "yearning" revealed by the young women of the focus group was to work with mentors who would help them to find direction in their lives. The young people often referred to the importance of having mentors.

> "It's like having someone to value who you are. It only takes one example for us to realize it can be done. It is important and makes you feel important when someone is willing to take the time to recognize your potential and is willing to teach you something that you're interested in and can be beneficial to your future," stated Sasha.

When I think of youth yearning for new experiences, I think of Dewey and progressive education. Dewey talked about experiences that should be educative. In *Curriculum and Aims,* he states, "The rift between curriculum and society must be bridged." This very important to the young people I interviewed. The article discusses how progressive education favors change and aligns itself with youth, whereas traditionalists are suspicious of change and see the adult as the mature and wise judge of what the young need to learn. Bank Street Faculty member, Sal Vascellero, spoke on education through first hand experiences during his class presentation.

Mr. Gonzalez also spoke on the benefits of hands on experience for out of school teens when he said that teens who drop out of school often turn toward informal education to help gain a sense of identity and agency based on active involvement. Both men expressed their excitement about the value of hands on experience that opens the door for future learning experiences.

Mr. Gonzalez also discussed teens' desires for new experiences as being something all educators should consider. "They are tired of the same old thing and their different ways of learning not being considered" (Gonzalez, 2012). He was insistent upon discussing informal learning as a benefit for out of school teens because of the new experiences it can provide.

> "I don't think there is an appreciation within formal learning for 'multiple intelligences.' This is where I feel structure becomes a hindrance in the learning process. In informal learning children can learn at their leisure while doing what they do or how they learn best, as long as learning is taking place. This experience is missing in formal schooling" (Gonzalez, 2012).

When Mr. Gonzalez was asked if the environment or culture of the school contributes to high drop out rates, he responded by saying that setting that makes a significant

difference. Informal learning provides settings that students can contribute to in their own ways and feel validated in doing so. This allows them to have ownership of their learning. Informal learning opens up the world as their classroom using their everyday experiences as lesson plans. Teenagers who have dropped out of school still can be presented with opportunities to learn.

Hull and Greeno would agree with Mr. Gonzalez that learning can take place anywhere. Mr. Gonzalez spoke about learning while being at home, playing with friends, working with colleagues, or being entertained; people learn ways of participating in the practices of their communities. "They learn ways of influencing others and being influenced, giving and taking directions, supporting or challenging or resisting proposals made by others, taking on and fulfilling commitments, or not. They also learn the information, concepts, patterns of reasoning, and other aspects of the contents of activity that are significant for participating successfully (Hull &Greeno, p.77). Maxine Greene and others state that the role of education and the responsibility of the teacher are to help students question what is going on around them in order to start their own journey toward freedom.

Youth are asking for community involvement in programs that offer education to help prepare them for employment; while communities are seeing the importance of that shared responsibility.

Young people are looking for approaches that enable them to participate as major players rather than as passive recipients, in that they are reshaping their lives and communities (Cahan& Gray, 2003). Young people claim that they are interested in learning outside of

the school as long as it is meaningful to them and they can have a say. "We don't have a problem with learning but let's make learning useful," said Chrissy age sixteen.

Bringing youth into businesses provides opportunities for time to be used constructively. "Instead of hanging out, watching television and playing video games we are learning by doing. We are visual learners and would benefit from hands on instructions," said Jasmin age 17. She added: "I feel what we learn in school is good, but it's not enough for us in this neighborhood to deal with the real world."

Involving community business owners in the education of our youths would provide an opportunity for young people to be challenged. "It's important for us to be brought out of our comfort zone and become well rounded. When you think about applying for college or going in for a job interview, they are looking for people not who just look good on paper but are well rounded," stated Sasha.

Traditional teaching runs directly counter to the natural learning process, a dynamic, socially conscious process whereby students learn by doing (Lynn, 2005). The youth expressed concern about how they want to feel valued as people and suggested that they hoped business owners would share the responsibility of educating our teens. As other researchers have noted, "These young people gave us access to youth perspectives, to activities, and to neighborhood respondents that otherwise would have been closed to us" (MCLaughlin, Irby, &Langman, 1994, preface).

Joan R. Wynn was involved in a program in Chicago three years ago similar to the Youth Education and Trade Program. She argues that there are opportunities for youth to benefit from participation, apprenticeships, internships, and employment which all share

a number of defining characteristics. Wynn states, "Youth have limited exposure through school or the media to the kinds of occupations to which they can aspire. Cumulatively, there are opportunities that can connect adolescents to skilled professionals in an array of occupations and help them understand the pathways these adults have pursued" (Wynn, 2012).

According to Wynn (2012), creating a system of out-of-school opportunities of this kind can also develop connections for youth between home, school, and neighborhood settings and opportunities located in the future. The chance to pursue interests, from participation to employment, can introduce youth to a world of broader prospects and a wider network of connections. In both formal and informal ways, these connections can enable young people to gather information about the world and how to navigate in it. As important, youth can meet people, program staff, internship instructors, and employers, all of whom have information about next steps, opportunities, and contacts young people can take advantage of.

On March 6, 2012, I was able to interview the community coordinator of The Bedford-Stuyvesant Renaissance Corporation via telephone. During the telephone interview, Ms. Day, who has been a part of the organization for nine years, recalled that they attempted a program to have teens shadow local business workers but, "the program was never instituted as a result of the lack of funding and resources needed for other existing projects." This is a common response that was echoed by several other community organization leaders.

Members of the community claim that young people need to be involved in positive things. Mr. Greg, of Greg's Plumbing said, "If youth had things to be involved in, I mean good things to do with their time, then they wouldn't be on the streets doing nothing." Six of the twelve business members of the community agreed with Mr. Greg. Ms. Johnson, owner of one of the local hair salons said, "Any program that can help teens learn to do something constructive and help them in their future could only be an asset to this community."

"Teaching youth that with adulthood come responsibilities, has been one of the foundational goals of T.O.Y.S.," as stated by Assistant Director, Ms. McKenzie. The organization encourages teens to consider ways in which education can lead them into careers that will allow them to handle the responsibilities that adulthood brings.

Data from this study shows the crucial need for community members to get involved and share responsibility for educating our youths. More important, it has shown why community business owners need to give back to the community by assuming such responsibility. Findings of this research support the findings of other researchers that there is a strong need for community members to take an active role in educating teens outside of school. In the course of helping to build the community and becoming mentors in the childrens' lives, essential academic and personal skills are being developed and strengthened. Teaching and learning for both young and older community members can take place in this type of setting.

There have been many claims by people who are interested or have already worked on understanding the need for community involvement in educating young people. Vision in Focus claims in our Mission Statement that, "we strive for our parents, staff, and

community members to be actively involved in our youths' learning." It also states that,

"We strive to make children confident and creative builders of their future. Our focus is

on the whole child. We aim for an atmosphere of cooperation, with respect for individual

differences and community values." Many of the claims in the mission statement are

geared to long lasting solutions. After many observations, interviews, and a review of

existing programs, it appeared to me that even the programs that relate to the mission

statement are only "Band-Aids." By this I mean that they provide temporary solutions at

best. A long term program would be a much needed addition to the youth services

provided at Vision in Focus. My next step was to redesign the Youth Education, Trade

and Career Program.

SOCIAL ACTION RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATION

As a result of my study, I recommended to my Board and staff the importance of

redesigning the Youth Education, Trade & Career Program, partly because I had come to

believe that traditional teaching runs directly counter to the natural learning process, a

dynamic, socially conscious process whereby students learn by doing (Lynn, 2005). The

youths' concerns about wanting to feel valued as individuals suggested an important

potential benefit of business owners sharing in the responsibility of educating our teens.

As other researchers have noted, "These young people gave us access to youth

perspectives, to activities, and to neighborhood respondents that otherwise would have

been closed to us" (MCLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994, preface).

Taking into consideration all of the gathered information and data, I began planning the

redesign of the Youth Education, Trade, and Career Program. I had to come up with

something that would be presentable to the Board while fulfilling the desires of the youth

participants and community members. I came up with a plan that was going to take

several months to complete.

The first step was to conduct a community mapping project. This consisted of

developing a community profile and canvass (which paints a broad picture about the

many assets in the community) while developing an individual asset bank, made up of

people who may be assets to the program. The Bonner Curriculum defines community

asset mapping as "the process of intentionally identifying the human, material, financial,

entrepreneurial and other resources in a community." The curriculum provides guidance

on how to uncover community assets and create a canvass or map of them. "It relies on

the framework of viewing a community from its assets, rather than deficits, in order to

utilize and manifest existing resources of all kinds." I used the gathered information from the community, business owners, and youth to present back to the Executive Board that would provide the funding.

When we began the community mapping project, we set up two goals. The first goal was defining and mapping community needs and assets. We were looking assets that could help redesign the Youth Education & Career Program. Our second goal was building collaboration between the community and its youth.

After setting our goals, we then explored the project process. We broke it down into the following:

What we are doing and how we are doing it.

- Developing a Community Profile and Canvass (which paints a broad picture about the many assets in the community.

  - o Community Canvassing

  - o Community Profile

  - o Community Map

- Developing an Individual Asset Bank, made up of people who may be assets to the project /initiative.

  - o Individual Asset Bank research

  - o Key Interviews

Our project focused on, *how can we as a CBO meet some of the needs and wants of the community?* Over a three day period we took three teams on a community learning walk. We took a team of five youths with an adult staff member, a team of six parents with a staff coordinator and finally a staff of five all participated in the community walk. On the fourth day we all came together after each group debriefed separately.

I began the community mapping project by doing a community walk. The rationale behind the community walk was program design. I started with the end in mind by using gathered information from the community to offer a foundation for program design. It was very important to have the voice of the community present in the program that we would then present back to the Executive Board.

The process for the community mapping was broken down into several steps amongst each group. In the group of staff we first examined the current Youth Education, Trade & Career Program. Second, we defined the geographic boundaries for the community walk:

- North to Flushing Avenue
- South to Atlantic Avenue
- West to Classon Avenue
- East to Broadway and Van Sinderan Avenue

Third, we decided which assets to inventory. We came up with institutions (schools, churches and other CBO's), local business owners, buildings, and individuals. Fourth, we decided who was going to be assigned what, and what questions we were trying to

answer. Finally, the staff decided how we were going to document the community assets that we identified. We actually used photos, videos, and internet research.

The youth group also examined the current Youth Education, Trade & Career Program. Second, they mapped the community wants and needs for the program by targeting local business owners, other youths, churches, and Samuel L. Barnes Elementary School (P.S. 54). These groups came together to formulate the questions that would be used to guide the search for visible and hidden community assets. The questions were divided into three categories. The first category was institutional assets; the second category was organizational assets; and finally individual assets.

Questions used to guide the search for visible and hidden community assets.
Institutional Assets: *Education & Schools*

1. How many schools are there including preschools, elementary, high schools, colleges, graduate programs, and vocational education? Map them.

2. Are there any unique or special attributes of the schools in the area (such as charter, magnet schools, privately funded, etc.)?

3. Are there known associations supporting or working on education, such as PTAs, parental associations, teacher associations, nonprofits?

Organizational Assets: *Business, Economy and Employment*

1. What kinds of businesses are there? Consider for for-profit and nonprofit businesses that provide jobs and employment opportunities.

2. What kinds of businesses are missing or absent, especially considering the basic needs of families?

3. What kinds of work, service, internship, and other opportunities are there for students and young people?

4. What is the balance of businesses owned/operated by people living in the community and people who don't live in the community?

5. What kinds of partnerships exist, if any, between small and large businesses and nonprofits, social service agencies, and other voluntary groups?

6. What types of training and education agencies or entrepreneurial programs related to business and employment exist (such as occupational training/employment centers)?

7. What are the major nonprofit organizations in the area? Are they locally focused or otherwise? What are their funding streams and/or funding focus areas?

Individual Assets:

The Bonner Curriculum defines an Individual Asset Bank as a compilation of information about individuals (of diverse means and backgrounds) who are potential assets to a project. As we began to build our individual asset bank we took into consideration their skills, talents and experiences. For the sake of this project we decided to focus on the following group of people:

1. A religious leader
2. A librarian
3. A small business owner
4. A small business employee

5. A big business manager
6. A big business employee
7. A non-profit organization employee
8. A high school student
9. An elementary school student
10. A high school teacher

The debriefing revealed so much real & rich information. During the debriefing of all three groups, the community voice was revealed. Communities wanted young people off of the streets and doing something productive that would lead them into careers. Schools wanted youth to graduate high school ready for college and careers. There was a present desire for schools and CBOs to be working toward a common goal. Churches & other CBOs wanted youth prepared to transition into adulthood. Local Business Owners wanted youths who were able to fill out job applications, submit a resume and complete a professional interview. Finally, youth wanted to be taught "useful information" such as resume writing and job readiness skills that would allow them to become productive members of society. During the debriefing, the community canvassing also revealed potential internship locations.

My next course of action was to design a program that would take all of these objectives into consideration. We arrived at a design that would include six required workshops. A unit was designed using the "Understanding by Design" (UbD) template titled, Career Readiness. The unit takes into consideration the new experiences desired by youth. The unit will also focus on the work readiness skills that young people need to obtain employment. The College and Career Readiness standards were used to design and will be used to implement education instructions for youth between the ages of sixteen to nineteen. Another set of workshops will be conducted for community business mentors

focusing on adolescent and teen development. Observations of meetings with participants to review goals and procedures will be done as well as meetings for planning activities and strategies to get the community involve.

I plan on arranging a meeting with Council Member Albert Vann (or a representative from his office) from the 36th Council District. The program will be introduced to him to find out what he could offer in terms of publicity, space, or referrals for networking with businesses. I also am trying to arrange an agreement with the NYC Civics Corp. If I register the program with them, we may be able to obtain the services of volunteers in a number of areas.

The Youth Education, Trade & Career Program can become a model illustrating how to build relationships empowering youth and adults as representatives of positive social change. "Social action research is not just a tool for solving problems; it is a valuable resource for building a sense of community" (Stringer, 1996, p. 96). The school cannot be the only institution responsible for educating our youth. The school may be the only institution officially charged with the responsibility and have that exclusive function, but the responsibility and ability of others to educate is beginning to be more recognized and cultivated.

This project has turned into a really meaningful subject for me. The data collected includes many statements of feelings and preferences. It made the need for the collaboration more realistic and visible. I often found myself wondering why the Youth Education & Career program sat dormant for so long. I soon realized, just as other organizations interviewed had, there was always something else that came up. Now

seeing the significance of such a program and the potential benefits for all involved, it is

an issue which will get the attention it deserves in my organization.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A……………………………Parent Survey

VIF International Multi-Service Center
Youth Education, Trade & Career Program

Parents

Date:_____

1. Would you be willing to allow your child to participate in a program geared towards helping and mentoring our community youth?
   a. __Yes
   b. __No
2. Do you think such a program would benefit you as a parent?
   a. __Yes. Explain_____

   _____
   b. __No. Explain_____

   _____
3. Presently. What is your child's afterschool activity?

4. Do you believe such a program will benefit your child?
   a. __Yes. Explain_____

   _____
   b. __No. Explain_____

   _____
5. Do you see improvement in your child as a result of being a part of T.O.Y.S?
   a. __Very much
   b. __Not much
   c. __Not sure
6. How often does your child spend time outside?
   a. __Often
   b. __Not often
   c. __Never
7. What outcomes do you expect from the program?

8. Would you encourage other parents to allow their children to participate in Y.E.T.P.?

    a. __Yes

    b. __No

9. Do you think this program will improve the community?

    a. __Yes. Explain_____

                _____

    b. __No. Explain_____

                _____

10. As a parent will you be willing to work with the program? (help support your child & mentor)

    a. Always

    b. Most of the time

    c. Some of the time

    d. Not at all

Appendix B…………………….…. Business Owners Survey

VIF International Multi-Service Center
Youth Education, Trade & Career Program

Community Business Owners
Date:_____

1. How would you feel about participating in a program geared towards helping and mentoring inner city youth?
    a. Like
    b. Dislike
    c. Unsure
2. If you could participate in such a program as Y.E.T., how often would you be willing to mentor?
    a. Every day after school
    b. Weekends only
    c. During the summer
    d. Other. Specify _____
    _____
3. Do you believe Y.E.T.P. would be beneficial to the youth in our community?
    a. Yes
    b. No
4. Do you believe Y.E.T.P. could benefit you as a business owner?
    a. Yes. Explain _____
    _____
    b. No. Explain _____
    _____
5. In what ways would your business be able to help mentor community youths?

6. Do you think this program will improve the community?
    a. Most likely
    b. Least likely
    c. Not sure
7. How could you help promote this program as a business owner?

8. Do you think this program could have a positive effector a negative effect on the relationship between business owners and community youths? Explain.

9. In your opinion what would be the perfect collaboration to make this program a success?

10. Do you believe mentoring is an effective way to help today's youth? Why?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Appendix C………………………….. Transcribed Teens Focus Group

Focus Question: How does informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens?

Date: 3/7/2012 **Duration:** 4:45:pm to 5:50pm **Place:** Vision in Focus Multi-Service Center

Context:

On March 7, 2012, I had the opportunity to video record and transcribe about fifty minutes of an interview with three teens from Vision in Focus youth services TOYS. Chrissy age 16 has been a part of TOYS for three years. Sasha age 17 has been a part of TOYS from the age of eight. Julissa who is 18 years old has been a part of Toys for five years. The focus group took place on a Wednesday afternoon right before a weekly youth "rap" session.

Interview:

Speaker	Statement	Interpretations
Andrea Block # 1	What do you think the ideal community and youth program would look like?	
Chrissy 2	Something that is geared towards helping the youth. Help kids that are in difficult situations. Like something that you don't see every day.	I don't think she believes there are enough support services for teens.
Sasha 3	I think the ideal program would [pause] something like this program. Something that has a lot of different areas. You know something where all kids could be involved and benefit from.	
Andrea 4	What do you mean by have a lot of different areas?	
Sasha 5	I mean different areas for us to play go on trips and learn. Not all the time do we all want to do or learn the same thing. If we could have a choice of what we want to do that would be cool.	"Choices" She desires a say in what she is involved in.
Julissa	Well I think the ideal program will offer	It can be inferred that she is looking for

6	a challenge. A lot of teens are not <mark>challenge in a positive way.</mark> All they know are the things they are used to doing. If you <mark>expose them to other things it will help make them more rounded.</mark>	something different from what she has already experience. She desires for programs to be more challenging which was interesting to hear. Teens having exposure to new positive experiences is what she viewed as challenging.
Sasha 7	It's like getting them to experience things they never had before.	
Julissa 8	Young people like their comfort zone. So <mark>exposure to other things</mark> can help them with that. When you <mark>apply for college they are looking for people who are well rounded.</mark>	"New Experiences" Her statement leads me to believe she has done some type of research into college.
Chrissy 9	When you have a baby brother or sister, you don't always get the <mark>chance to do other things.</mark> [ ] Like, most of the time you have to be at home helping out or my mom can't <mark>afford to enroll me in other things</mark>.	A theme that keeps emerging is teens desiring new experiences as mention by Julissa in block 8. Financial "accessibility" is also a concern for youths.
Julissa 10	That is another thing that is <mark>important is that these programs be free.</mark> The young people who really need these programs cannot offer dues and membership fees. When I was in girl scout we had to pay and then for extra activities there is always uniforms and dues my parents had to pay.	Youth financial accessibility to programs is another concern express by Julissa and by Chrissy in block 9& 13.
Sasha 11	Not everyone can offer to pay those things but it <mark>doesn't mean that they are not interest in participating in out of school stuff.</mark>	Has a desire to do constructive things out of school.
Julissa 12	I think a good program will <mark>keep in mind the people they are supposed to help.</mark>	Want program designers to keep demographics in mind.
Chrissy 13	It's just like in the summer time when we are out of school and you see the other kids going to camp in stuff. <mark>Most kids would like to spend their summer going on trips and having fun with their friends but if your mom or dad can't afford it then you feel left out.</mark>	Chrissy statement leads me to believe there are not enough free or affordable structured out of school programs during the summer for youths.
Sasha	Then you know sometimes kids are	

14	mean to each other.[ ]	
Julissa 15	[Long Pause] a good program would be year around and help keep all kids off the streets and doing productive things.	It can be inferred that she is describing a program with limited restrictions.
Sasha 16	I think often times adults forget that kids are a part of the community too.	A desire was shown for the community to validate youths and see them as important.
Andrea 17	Would you say that the Youth Education and Trade Program would be something you can benefit from? Why or Why not?	
Julissa 18	Yes! I think it will be a benefit cause it's not textbook learning but more hands on. {Before she could finish}	It can be inferred that she view the program as providing the opportunity to have more hands on learning than in school settings provides. (formal vs. informal learning)
Sasha 19	Exactly. Actual hands on is better. If you would go out into a different site & actually work in the site, you will learn, actually, personally I think you will learn better by doing then just telling me something.	Value hands on experiences as a method of learning
Chrissy 20	It's like bringing what's written alive and then it becomes more relevant to you.	Again, physical involvement as a method for learning.
Julissa 21	You will feel more engaged and involved.	Benefits of hands on experiences.
Chrissy 22	I think any program that can provide education and skills that will lead to an income would benefit all involved.	Benefits of program.
Julissa 23	In today's economy I believe everyone need some type of skill to fall back on.	Expectations from program
Sasha 24	To have a, a an avenue to learn; anything that is going to be able to allow people to support themselves is always a good thing.	Julissa in box 23 and Sasha in this box, lead me to believe they are expecting the program to provide career readiness skills and opportunities.
Andrea 25	Some people would say teens are not interested in learning outside of school. What would you say to them?	
Chrissy 26	That they need to sit down and talk with some teens.	

Julissa **27**	That is not true. School is so structure that there is no room for much of anything else.	It can be inferred that there is a lack of freedom in school.
Sasha **28**	Really. At least in a program like this you get to work with a mentor one on one.	Value learning one on one.
Chrissy **29**	(Jumped right in) And it makes a difference when you are doing something you like or have an interest in.	Participation is greater when learner has an interest in subject matter.
Julissa **30**	It's like you have a say in constructing the curriculum	"Participation" Young people want to have a say and be heard.
Sasha **31**	You are actually having a say in what you want to learn and then having someone to discuss your interest and concerns with. You don't get to do that in school.	Desires the opportunity to express what they are thinking about and what interest them. Comparison between formal and informal learning. See benefits of informal learning.
Julissa **32**	I feel this program can help in so many ways because it allows us to explore our dreams. We get to choose a career path and then see how hard work and education can bring us to our dreams and careers.	Julissa smiled with excitement in her eyes when she made this statement which leads me to believe that this meant a lot to her. The discussion with in itself was rewarding for her.
Sasha **33**	It's also good because business people in the community can stop seeing us as a threat and realize that we have potential.	I believe she feels young people are perceived negatively in the community.
Chrissy **34**	Not every teen is trying to be destructive.	
Julissa **35**	(Interrupting) I'm sorry. And with a lot of the youth work programs being taken away this program will provide another opportunity for teens to work. When kids graduate high school and don't plan on going to college or don't have anyone to help them plan to go to college then what is there for them.	Provides another reason why program is needed. She asks a good question. What happens after high school? What preparation is being made for teens for after high school especially for teens that do not plan on going to college?
Chrissy **36**	I think the program can be. It's learning in a fun way.	
Julissa	I think people forget that school is not all	

37	that people think it is. I mean you learn things but <mark>you don't learn enough for what you need in the real world.</mark> They <mark>seem to think everybody world is the same.</mark> What you need to survive in your world I might not need or I may need that and more.	1. View school as being insufficient for what they need to learn. 2. Desire for educators to take into consideration their students differences.
Sasha 38	Exactly, one of my friends says <mark>she has to get her two sisters ready for school before she comes to school and then she never has time to finish her homework and our math, our math teacher is always I mean always yelling at her for being late first period.</mark> I'm like dag, can a girl catch a break.	I was thinking the little girl she was talking about parents should be made aware of what was going on in the class with their child. Once the issue had been addressed with parents then maybe the teacher could come up with a plan where the student could benefit from homework instead of resenting it.
Chrissy 39	I know what she means but I think sometimes <mark>schools don't take our family life into consideration so being able to learn outside school may help.</mark>	Another comparison between formal and informal learning.
Julissa 40	You can learn anywhere sometimes the problem is who is teaching. I feel it's like Sasha said, <mark>having a say in what you learn and someone who shares your interest is what will make a big difference in everything.</mark>	Feel it is vital for teens to have a say in their education and someone to discuss their interest and concerns with.

Notes on Notes:

Our time ran out before I was able to ask all of the questions but I thought it was important for them to be able to speak freely without any interruptions. The girls were very expressive in their thoughts and often one girl would continue where another one stopped. I thought it was interesting to see how the girls felt about learning outside of school and the implementation of the program. I was curious to see if they thought of it as just another method of getting them to learn or was it something they thought would be considered beneficial amongst teenagers. It was very informative to see what they considered to be the most beneficial aspects of having an Education, Trade and Career Program.

Julissa in block 35 said, "When kids graduate high school and don't plan on going to college or don't have anyone to help them plan to go to college then what is there for them." If we want teens to successfully transition into adulthood, supports cannot end when students leave high school, either as graduates or dropouts. In order for them to succeed educators need to broaden our thinking beyond the classroom, beyond the school day, beyond academics and beyond the age 18.

I saw the importance of having a way for them to experience the world of work in a meaningful way, like through mentoring. In block 28 Sasha said, "At least in a program like this you get to work with a mentor one on one." They all often spoke about having someone to talk to and discuss things with. It is important for the community business owners who will be providing the internships to understand what youths are expecting of them as mentors.

Free- choice learning is defined as giving student the opportunity to have a say in what they learn. In block 3 Julissa spoke about having a say in constructing curriculum. Young people desire to feel like participants in their own education. They want to have a say and be heard. Through free-choice learning, youth are given a voice. They can also acquire and develop an understanding of a wide array of subjects, learn basic life skills such as how to earn an income and how to collaborate on projects and communicate with others and develop a sense of leadership and responsibility (Dierking, L.D. & Falk, J. H., 2003).

The three young ladies really focused on how learning through the program would be less school structured in using textbook and lectured styles of learning and kept reiterating the opportunity to learn through hands on and direct interaction as seen in blocks 18 -20. All three young ladies believed the program would allow them an opportunity to have a say in their education and to actually be a part of the structure of the learning. The idea that the very act of participating in deliberation and decision making has a high pedagogical potential can be traced back at least to Aristotle.

Using the community as a learning environment engages and motivates youths by using the resources, challenges, assets of the community as part of the core curriculum. Julissa and Chrissy in blocks 20 and 21 discussed the importance of relevant content that allows them to feel more engaged. Youths show greater interest and academic success when content is meaningful and relevant and when it contributes to their sense of community connectedness and pride. When the community is used as text for instruction or even as tools within instruction, young people can become assets in their community, helping to solve specific problems in the community alongside adults. I think Julissa had a nice summation in block 40 when she said, "Having a say in what you learn and someone who shares your interest is what will make a big difference in everything." Learning environments outside of school such as the Youth Education & Trade program can show promises of creating pathways to post-secondary education, careers, and engaged citizenship for urban young people. This interview was very informative because they gave me ideas to include in the program proposal. The benefits they discussed would be considered as future projective outlooks.

Appendix D……………………………Unit Lesson Plan

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Job/Work Readiness   **Grade Level: 17- 19 years old**

Subject/Topic Area: Reading, Writing and Listening

Designed by: Mrs. Andrea Williams

Brief Summary of Unit:

The unit will focus on the work readiness skills young people need to obtain employment. Using the College and Career Readiness standards to design and implement education instructions for youths between the ages of seventeen to nineteen.

UbD Template

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goals:

Writing Standards 6 - 12

CCR. 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Speaking and Listening Standards 6–12

CCR. 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance,

and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Understandings:	*Essential questions:*
• Students will understand that exhibiting professional dress is important when interviewing for a job. • Students will understand that proper writing skills are needed for success in obtaining employment. • Students will understand appropriate formats should be used for resumes. • Students will understand an application for employment should be filled out neatly and completely. • Students will understand that exhibiting appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication is important when interviewing for a job.	• How do you use a career planning process that includes self-assessment, personal development, and a career portfolio as a way to gain initial entry into the workplace? • How do you prepare for entering the work?
Students will know…	*Students will be able to…*
• How to apply for a job • How to dress and conduct themselves on a job interview • How to write a resume • How to complete a job application	• Properly interview for employment. • Format and create documents required to gain employment. • Select appropriate attire for interviewing. • Conduct themselves in a

	professionally work environment.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance tasks:

- Design a career plan
- Prepare a resume for a job they selected from our list of internships
- Fill out a mock application
- Participate in a mock interview as the interviewee
- Interview other class mates as the employer
- Go shopping to select interview attire
- Students participate in a job shadow of their chosen career
- They role-play the potential conflicts and resolutions found at job sites.
- Design a work portfolio

Other evidence:

- Going on real interviews with our business owners (who placing teens in their businesses as part of the internship program) who will have a rubric to assess our teens interviewing skills.
- Obtaining internship with business owners.
- Keep a journal on the process of applying and getting hired for a position.
- Create a presentation for the job shadow experience.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning activities:

- Take the Meyers Biggs personality test.
- Analyze skills and abilities required in a variety of career options and relate them to their own skills and abillties.
- Build upon self-assessment skills.
- Design a list of action verbs illustrating their strengths.
- Small group discussions and creating a list of vocabulary words job related. ex. Terminate, Allocate, Cooperate, Administrator
- Guided practice to develop work documents.
- Will watch videos of other mock interviews and will peer assess.
- Will participate in groups correcting resume samples.

- Solve a work related dilemma showing proper work etiquette.
- After reading an article, they discover matters of etiquette and conflict that occur at job sites.
- Through whole group and small discussions teens will discuss influences in their lives that affect their working choices.

Appendix E…………………………. IRB Materials

May 9, 2013

Andrea Williams

Dear Andrea,

Your proposal and consent letters and forms for working with human participants for your Independent Study have been approved. You may commence your work with human participants. If you make any significant changes to your work with human participants, you need to inform the IMP Committee in writing of your plans. Please place a copy of this letter along with unsigned sample copies of any consent letters and forms in a Permissions section at the end of your appendix. Keep the original signed forms in a safe place for five years.

The best of luck with your study. We look forward to having the completed copy in the Bank Street College Library.

Sincerely,

Nina Jensen

Nina Jensen, Chair

Integrative Master's Project Committee

VISION IN FOCUS INTL. MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

953 DEKALB AVENUE
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1 (347) 782 -9928

574 EAST 31ST STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11210
1 (347)271-6816

Dear Staff/Community Member,

My name is Andrea Williams and I am a graduate student in Leadership in Community Based Education at Bank Street College of Education in New York. I am also Director of Vision in Focus Intl. Multi-Service Center. I am currently conducting research for my Master's thesis and will be acting as the principal investigator for this study. The goal of my Master's thesis is to better understand how informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens with the purpose of redesigning our Youth Education, Trade & Career program. I am interested in learning about how to get community members involved and learning what your desires and expected outcomes are from a school to work program. As a staff and/or member of the community your participation is appreciated. Information that you provide me with will be used in the planning of this program.

As a participant of this study you will be asked to participate in surveys, focus groups, community walks and interviews. Please note that if the feedback that you share during this time is included in the thesis, then your name will be changed to protect your privacy. Please also note that the Master's thesis will be placed in the stacks of the Bank Street Library and will be available to all students and faculty; the document may also be circulated to others outside of the institution. The thesis will also be utilized at Vision in Focus and may serve as a model program for other CBO's interested in establishing school to work programs for out of school teens.

Please complete the form below indicating that you grant permission for the information that you provide to be used for the purpose of this study.

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights with me. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at hadmj@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Andrea Williams

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant (please print) Harold Williams

Signature H. Williams -Exe. Director of V.I.F.

Date: 05-02-2013

VISION IN FOCUS INTL. MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

953 DeKalb Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11221
1 (347) 782 -9928

574 East 31st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11210
1 (347)271-6816

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Andrea Williams and I am a graduate student in Leadership in Community Based Education at Bank Street College of Education in New York. I am also Director of Vision in Focus Intl. Multi-Service Center. I am currently conducting research for my Master's thesis and will be acting as the principal investigator for this study. The goal of my Master's thesis is to better understand how informal learning benefit school to work programs for out of school teens with the purpose of redesigning our Youth Education, Trade & Career program. I am interested in learning about how to get community members involved and learning what your desires and expected outcomes are from a school to work program. As a parent or guardian of a child(ren) in this organization your participation is appreciated. Information that you provide me with will be used in the planning of this program.

As a participant of this study you will be asked to participate in surveys, focus groups, community walks and interviews. Please note that if the feedback that you share during this time is included in the thesis, then your name will be changed to protect your privacy. Please also note that the Master's thesis will be placed in the stacks of the Bank Street Library and will be available to all students and faculty; the document may also be circulated to others outside of the institution. The thesis will also be utilized at Vision in Focus and may serve as a model program for other CBO's interested in establishing school to work programs for out of school teens.

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Sincerely,

Mrs. Andrea Williams