Sandra Cisneros Latinas Literature -Service Learning project

The Purdue Latinas Literature project is a Service Learning component added to the courses Spanish Level 7 and 8 at Purdue. It allows undergraduate students to participate in activities and learning experiences with our community partner in Lafayette, the Opening Doors program for the education and empowerment of Hispanic parents.

Opening Doors is a school readiness national program based on the premise that education, solidarity and inclusion leads to social change (http://ap-od.org/about-us). It consists of 2-hour weekly classes for a total of 10 weeks that cover many topics from health to education to finances.

The Purdue Latinas Literature program expands on a project started by two Purdue graduate students in Spanish, Sandra Usuga and Esther Teixeira, who collaborated with Opening Doors as facilitators and educators. Cecilia Tenorio, director of Spanish Level 7 and 8, decided to team up with Usuga and Tixeira, to make the project available to undergraduate students, with the support of a grant provided by Indiana Campus Compact.

Advanced Spanish students from SPAN 401 and 402 at Purdue are required to research an assigned topic, discuss it with a coordinator, and create an interactive presentation for the women in the Opening Doors program. Students have pre-participation discussions and guidance in designing the activities, and post-participation reflections and class presentations. The service-learning project is part of the course grade but it is not required. Still, 24 out of 25 students in those classes decided to participate this semester.