Global Education and Professional Development of Minority Youth

Project Overview

“Global Education and Professional Development of Minority Youth” was developed to establish connections between the Purdue student body and the Frankfort community. By engaging high school students in workshops that focus on identities, students are encouraged to identify and market the talents they contribute to an increasingly globalized world. Students participate in workshops to develop their professional skills and articulate their transnational social location. The workshops were designed to empower our participants to embrace their sense of social value and responsibility in their communities with the perspective of a global citizen.

Project Design

Between December 2016 and the end of February 2017, we conducted six workshops focusing on questions of identity, citizenship, education, and immigration at the Purdue Extension Learning Network (local Community Center). A group of twelve Latina high school students, three Purdue graduate students, and one Purdue alumna met to discuss socio-cultural issues which impact and shape our daily lives and social relations.

We began each meeting by defining the theme of the workshop and introducing key concepts. Next, we asked the participants to identify the concepts in general life examples. Lastly, the participants applied the concepts to their personal life experiences and had the opportunity to share their insight with the rest of the group. Each workshop concluded with students exchanging their ideas on the significance of the topic to their daily realities. Workshops were also designed to enhance students’ resume-building, interviewing, and networking skills.

Student Impact

Based on students’ feedback, we have identified four major impacts of our workshops:
1) our participants opened up and talked about certain aspects of identities they wanted to discuss but never had the opportunity to do so;
2) workshop participants reflected on their positionalities as young minority women in U.S. society and beyond;
3) workshops enhanced professional skills which will help them as they move towards higher education and the job market; and
4) our workshops inspired them to become more engaged in their communities.

Methods

Our workshops were informed by concepts and theoretical frameworks such as identity, global citizenship, culture, ethnicity/race, gender, media, and education. For instruction, we followed Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy approach of “critical consciousness”, which focuses on attaining an in-depth global awareness and comprehension of social and political contradictions especially in regards to one’s own geopolitical and social existence. Utilizing critical consciousness creates a student-centered and dialogue-based environment to empower students to voice their ideas and concerns freely and to make the workshop experience relevant and meaningful to their everyday lives.

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