

Leadership Identity and Critical Thinking Development in CIP Cohort Projects



Allison Dumas, M.A.
Research with Sandra Mahoney, Ed.D.

Background: The CIP Story at Pacific



- ❧ The Community Involvement Program (CIP) is a University sponsored comprehensive, need-based scholarship program for first-generation college students from the Stockton community, primarily from underrepresented backgrounds. CIP serves the educational needs of low-income students by providing financial access to college along with a wide range of retention support.
- ❧ CIP has a six-year graduation rate of 87% and includes an experienced curriculum with an emphasis on leadership development and community service. CIP uses these experiences (which empower others – primarily youth) to increase CIP student self-efficacy.

Co-curricular Development and Community Service - Leadership Models in CIP

- ❧ CIP students explore their personal student identity development and are introduced to the Social Change Model of leadership development (Astin, 1996). Through direct dialogue with peers and self-reflection, students learn the value of continued engagement with others as a means to gain perspective and understanding of their own communities and environments. Students learn to view leadership as a process rather than a position.
- ❧ The Leadership Identity Development Model (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainellal, and Osteen; 2005) is used to frame ongoing development.

What is Higher Education's Responsibility to Serving the Public Good?



- ❧ Institutions of higher education produce new knowledge, validate existing knowledge, educate citizens (Kezar, 2005).
- ❧ Contributes to the evolving narrative that gives voice to diverse communities.
- ❧ With the increasing cultural and racial diversity of citizens in the US., leaders need the cultural competence to guide and inspire diverse identities (Bordas, 2012).

Overview of the Study



- ❧ Explored holistic, experiential leadership identity development in CIP students who participated in 10 or more hours of service with a community literacy project.
- ❧ Results demonstrated that the experience went beyond the expected service. The CIP students designed their own literacy project using a superhero experience to promote reading and motivation to read in community youth.
- ❧ The students said their leadership identity transformation was key to their college experience.
- ❧ Reflective critical thinking demonstrated an initiation of understanding of their deeper selves in responsible leadership.

Methods



This research was conducted by using qualitative methodologies.

Research questions:

1. What are CIP students' understandings of leadership?
2. What are CIP students' perceptions of the contributions of their literacy program experiences toward developing their change-oriented leadership skills?
3. What stage(s) of leadership identity development are associated with CIP students' volunteer experiences?

The Study

Research question 1: “What are CIP students’ understanding of what leadership is?”



After CIP students’ first experience with the children in the library literacy program, in response to a written prompt, the majority of students said that being a leader meant taking the initiative or “putting your best foot forward.”



After CIP students' spring semester experiences with the library literacy program, the majority said that leadership is about making a difference, communicating and connecting.

Summary of Finding 1



❧ Students initiated their volunteer work with the literacy program with an exploratory understanding of leadership. After their experiences with the library literacy program they had developed an understanding of the complexities of the leadership skills and relationship.

Research question 2: “What are CIP students’ perceptions of the contributions of their literacy program experiences toward developing their change-oriented leadership skills?”



- ❧ After CIP students spring semester experiences with the library literacy program, in response to a written prompt the majority said that participating in the literacy program improved their communication skills. Some stated that prior to their involvement in the program they were quiet and nervous, but because of the program they learned “that I’m not a victim anymore”



✧ In working with the planning group “we all listened to each other and allowed for ideas to be shared. It is a very beautiful process to see unfold. I would do this project a thousand times over if I had the chance.”



At the first data collection point student responses aligned with a section of stage 3 “Leader identified” and also aligned with the upper section and upper transition phase of “Leadership differentiated.” In these phases students are taking on responsibility, learning about personal influence and efficacy, and they begin to coach others.

Conclusions



- ❧ The findings of this study advance an understanding of the value of community-based experience for students in college in realizing their leadership identity to the extent that they change in fundamental ways, and integrate the process of leadership development to engage and create new experiences for developing others.

The Story of the Changes for the CIP Students



- ❧ The LID changes for students in this study were positive. In addition, student development went beyond the expected service. CIP students intentionally developed more opportunities to engage with the community and the students validated the cultural relevance of the program by advancing the community connection into a meaningful experience for themselves.
- ❧ They created the literacy project, to intentionally address the literacy problems in our community, especially targeting African American and Latino males.
- ❧ The increased self efficacy and positive reinforcement from project participants led to the creation of mentor projects, complete with proposals (including curriculum, assessment) presented to local elementary administrators and ultimately funded by a private donor.

The Story in the Study



✧ “Read with a Superhero” promotes literacy to Stockton youth. This project collected over 3,000 books to disperse and targeted African American and Latino youth, especially males who are traditionally disconnected from education. (SJ County ELA proficiency for Black and Brown 3rd graders is 25% and 24% respectively) citation: California DOE, 2013



And the positivity continues...



CIP CHASE your Dreams mentoring
project at Cleveland Elementary –
funded by \$50,000 donation

CIP Literacy Projects with
SJ County Library



Suggested References

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