1-2-2002

Little Priest Tribal College - Focus Group Results

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Scholarly Commons Citation
Lehrer, H., & Bowen, B. D. (2002). Little Priest Tribal College - Focus Group Results. (). Retrieved from https://commons.erau.edu/ni-s3aci-lptc-focus-group/1

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Focus Group Results

LPTC 1/2/2002

Question #1: Is the use of NASA-based aeronautics and space to teach mathematics, science, and technology a viable motivator of Native American youth, particularly at-risk students?

Answers:
- Staff development
  - Must be continuous
  - Teacher training
  - Community awareness
  - Lesson plans
- Hands-on Activities:
  - Earth Kam on ISS: 3 or 4 IBM thinkpads / students assigned roles
  - Supplement with additional resources such as CAP, Fish & Wildlife (endangered species), etc . . . to enhance math/science learning
  - SASM Camp – certificate
  - Zoo trips
  - Fontenelle Forest
  - Planetarium: Astronomy and Space
- Community awareness / lessons plans
- Archeological digs (Lynch, NE)
- NASA has nothing post workshop for evaluating classroom experience
  - Highlight connections to the real world by filling in the gaps
  - How is NASA connected to the entire education experience?
- Ham Radio License:
  - Getting more involvement
  - Talk to astronauts
  - Emergency response team
  - Community implications
- Key components:
  - Hands-on
  - Exposure to career options in Nebraska
  - Exciting
- Native American cultural aspect needs to be integrated (preservation)
  - European philosophy versus Native American culture
  - Use the positive reinforcement aspect of the Native American culture
- Building of careers and inspiring interest
- Exposure to actual laboratories and successful role models (Native American Astronaut, John Herrington / “One Walk, One Drum, One Star, One Dream”)
• Bring students to the actual laboratories to expose them to the field  
• Teaching students that these careers are attainable so they may overcome obstacles  
• Possible careers: Maintenance, National Park Service, Army Corp. of Engineers, etc . . .  
  - NSIP  
  - NASA Student Involvement Program  
  - Accounting for the non-traditional student  
    • Perhaps part-time education could allow additional students to participate and obtain degrees  
    - Must recruit (younger) students earlier so they are eager and ready to learn  
    - Must have a scope and sequence that does not repeat itself to ensure students are not bored with the material  

Question #2: Can Family Science make a difference and how can the concept be streamlined? Has the ASA sponsored Family United (FUN) in the Discovery of Mathematics, Science, and Technology initiative been effective?  

Answers:  
- Very effective to involve families by encouraging them to work together  
- Excellent concept that will streamline itself with time (holistic, cohesive)  
- Very close to Native American values (involving the entire community)  
- Works best to get suggestions from those involved  
- Scope and sequence need to be developed (uniformity)  
  • remove excess duplication  
  • necessary to reinforce via application (tutoring)  
- Foundations / Blueprint  
- Curriculum as cornerstone (staff development)  
- Effective measure of success = retention through college graduation  
- Validates their learning:  
  • Takes away the mystery and fear  
  • Gets families together: builds respect for children and faith in their abilities  
  • successful because of the families’ perception of education  
  • future opportunities look more promising from the parents’ perspective  
- Food, Family time: emphasizing food and prayer  
- Enhancement of community values and community buy-in  
- Students enjoy freedom of stations  
- Tracking numbers in classes as outcomes  
- Must provide an easily adaptable model  

Question #3: Should there be a continuous NASA-based science and mathematics track from elementary/secondary to tribal college?  

Answers:  
- Career Awareness:
- Hand pick students to track their progression
- Girls need more reinforcement
- LPTC:
  - Average age = 34
  - 80% female
  - 60% part-time
- “Turf” issues
- Theme – year
- AISES Chapter
- LPTC Mentors for high school students
- Mentoring programs
- Speaker series
- Meeting between faculty (talk about scope and sequence)
- Workshops that are community-wide
- Standards
  - There should be a database for standards lesson plans
  - Themes need to identify standards or they will not be utilized
- NASA-based math/science track
  - Must start targeting younger students (Head Start / Pre-K)
  - Emphasize 4th – 9th grades and track their attendance
  - Track to specific fields (camps, classes, etc. . .)
  - What are the choices that interest them?
  - Adapt to the next generation
  - Coordinating elementary, secondary, and college (must dialogue)
  - Losing students to lack of opportunity
- Math & reading readiness
  - Student database (Nebraska Department of Education Commission)
  - Correlation with state standards
- Building on a continuous flow – must be ready to continue the effort
- If done right, we can create stability

Question #4: How should the UNO Aviation Institute and the Nebraska NASA Space Grant & EPSCoR proceed in the coming years to better serve the students, faculty, and staff of the state’s 4 reservation schools and 2 tribal colleges?

Answers:
- Research:
  - Break down into skills
  - Needs to be done – IMPORTANT
  - Baselines are needed
  - Action research
  - Using the term “Inquiry” to get away from the negative connotations of the word “research”
  - Need to use vocabulary of tribes, there is not single word for research!
  - Giving back through outcomes (educating and spreading)
  - Data collection
• How to get students and faculty engaged in research?
  - Faculty development:
  • Train in curriculum areas
  • Lesson plans
  • Courses
  • Substitute teachers need a solid foundation
  - Need to tie scholarships to these needs
  - Create mutually beneficial partnerships (equal)
  • Example: the Native American schools lack human resources and NASA could fund the salary of a science teacher (filling the labor shortage)
  • Must be serious and realistic
  - Lack space and resources (personnel)
  - Consider other large-scale events for the entire community
  • i.e. science fairs, rallies, contests, etc.
  - Technology networking
  • Need distance learning at Santee
  • College recruitment
  • A Website is needed