Reach for Your Dreams: A Template for Recruitment of First Generation Students to Higher Education

Dholani Nanayakkara, Dana Ngo (Theresa Martinez)
Department of Sociology, Health Science LEAP Program
University of Utah

The objective of this project is to introduce careers that require a college degree to elementary school children and to encourage them to attend an institution of higher education. A literature review on this topic yielded several important findings: first, it was found that many schools do not have career awareness programs because of limited resources such as time, budget and equipment. Second, in similar studies that have been conducted, the results indicate that career education provided students with activities for achieving self-esteem and helped to answer questions such as “Who am I?” “Why do I have to learn this?” and “Where am I going?” In addition, it has raised students’ familiarity with many professions. Third, lack of career education has caused a majority of students to be interested in occupations such as singer, actor and dancer that are perpetuated by the media. Having these findings in mind, the project was set up to introduce several different careers to an elementary school class in a western state. A post survey was given at the end of the project to see if there was an increased interest in pursuing a higher education.