

Enhancing Communication Skills for a Better Tomorrow

Senior Project

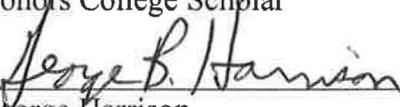
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By

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Thank you all for everything you have done, for if it were not for you all, this would have not been possible.

Abstract

The scope of this service learning project is to help enhance the communications skills of high school students and to help them to prepare for college. Three workshops were held and each workshop was geared toward a specific topic. The topics addressed were of the following: Paper Revisions, Creating Resumes, and Email Etiquette.

Enhancing Communication Skills for a Better Tomorrow

For my senior project, I have chosen to complete a Service-Learning project. This project is geared towards my community, a small town in Columbus County called Lake Waccamaw. Being that I am a Mass Communications major with a concentration in Public Relations, the area in which I have chosen to focus on is communication skills. This project consisted of two workshops that focus on the enhancement of communication for high school students preparing for college.

Workshop One: 9th-10th Grade

The first workshop took place on Saturday, September 24, 2016 and was held at East Columbus High School in Lake Waccamaw, NC. The duration of this workshop was from 11am-1pm.

For the first workshop, we had a total of 8 students. Prior to the start of the workshop, we took a poll on what area the students wanted the most help in. Properly revising papers ranked the highest.

Each student each had a paper that they had previously written, had been graded and needing revising. We placed them in groups of 2-3 so they would also be able to help each other with revision that they may have missed if they were reading it just for themselves.

The first step was reading their papers aloud to themselves. This would allow for them to hear what they had actually written. They were not to make any corrections as they read, just to listen. Secondly, we had the students read through the comments that were given in order to revise the paper. Understanding what needs to be revised and why is very important when it comes to paper revisions. The next step they were to complete

was to read aloud a second time, but this time, they were to mark anything else wrong that they saw as they read. Next, we had them take each comment that was given by the teacher and work on it individually, section by section. By doing each section individually, you can focus on perfecting one area as opposed to revising the entire paper at once. After addressing each section, they were to add their revision on to the paper on their laptops. After making the edits, we had them read over it one last time and then read over their group member's paper.

KEY POINTS ADDRESSED:

During workshop one, the communication skills that were being focused on were listening, arranging ideas and expressing ideas. According to Alan Baker's *Improve Your Communication Skills*, these are important steps in not only bettering your oral communication but your written communication as well.

By reading their papers aloud and reading the comments given by the teacher, they were able to listen to what they had written and see how it sounded as well as understand what areas the teacher wanted them to better explain. This led to the next focus point of arranging and expressing ideas. There were some areas of the students' papers where they needed to rearrange their ideas and change some of the wording in order to better explain their thoughts. In order to properly arrange and express your ideas, you must be able to imagine any questions your reader may have and be able to express your thoughts effectively for those questions to be answered.

Workshop Two: 11th-12th Grade

During workshop two, the focus was on writing resumes for college. When applying for colleges, there is always a section where they ask you to provide a resume of all that you have done during your years in high school. Understanding what information to put on these resumes is very important.

We first had the students write down all of their extracurricular activities that they had participated in during their years in high school. This would include things such as academic clubs, social clubs, and athletic clubs. They would also need to list any academic awards, honors, and achievements. Next we had them list any type of service hours they had participated in as well as outside of school. This list would consist of things such as Relay for Life, volunteering, working at charity events, so on and so forth. Next was listing any work experience they had while in high school. We then had them to write down their hobbies and their special interests. Following that, they were to record all of their basic personal information. This would consist of name, address, email, general high school information including GPA, SAT scores, rank, etc. Students would also need to include the coursework they have completed along with their transcript.

KEYPOINTS ADDRESSED:

During workshop two, the focus was on formatting and content. When writing resumes for college applications, one must be able to encompass his or her information in a format that is readable and understandable to the individuals who will be receiving the information. Each section needs to be clearly stated with its own heading. Things like fonts, font size and lists should be consistent throughout the resume.

Workshop Three: All Grades

During workshop three, we brought all the students together and worked on something that you can never start too early on: Email Etiquette. We first had students pull up their emails and together, we went step by step through a few basic steps you need to know when sending an email, especially to a professor. First we made sure that the email address we were using was correct, checking the spelling of the name and the browser. Next, we made sure we had a proper subject that coincided with the purpose of our email. Then, we included a formal greeting (Dr. /Professor). Lastly, we worked on sentence phrasing, for example, the sentence, "Email me as soon as possible". When communicating with a professor, this sentence can be taken as rude and demanding. A way of re-wording this sentence properly would be, "Please advise me at your earliest convenience." After completing the email, proofreading was the final step.

KEY POINTS ADDRESSED:

The final workshop focused on proper communication between a professor and the student. One must understand that showing proper email etiquette shows respect and knowledge for what you are doing. Email is one of the most effective and efficient forms of communication, especially when it comes to college students and professors. It is very universal. It is very important to take your time when sending an email and to make sure that your message is well written because once you hit send, the first impression has been made.

Conclusion

As we were completing this project, we had a few statements from a couple of the students on their views of the workshops. Eleventh Grader Jazmyne Brown stated, "I am so glad that I was able to be a part of these workshops! They really helped me in preparing for my final year of high school as well as applying for college." Ninth Grader Iyonna Smith stated, "-These workshops really made me realize what will be expected of me when I get to college. Although I am a freshman, I feel as if I am taking the necessary steps early to make my transition to college so much easier."

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