

SPARK: Students Promoting Academic Reading and Knowledge

Amoy Reid, Jennifer Solley, Maureen Forbes, Thea Knight and Stacey Stember

Project Description

Reading is fundamental. It is an integral part of everything that we do in college and life. Reading faculty collaborated to create a dynamic project to SPARK the change in how reading is approached across the curriculum. We designed cross disciplinary lessons that focused on the theme of “Everyday Heroes” while addressing the various learning styles in the classroom.

Objectives

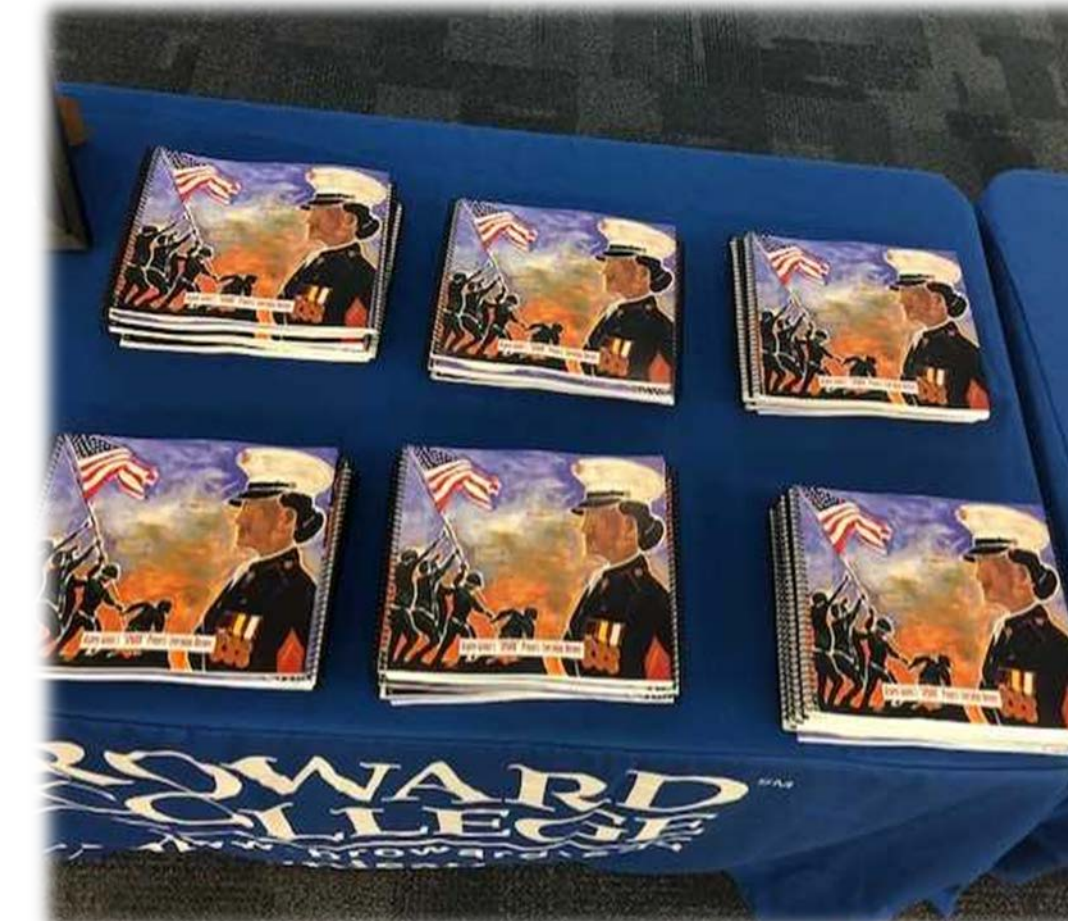
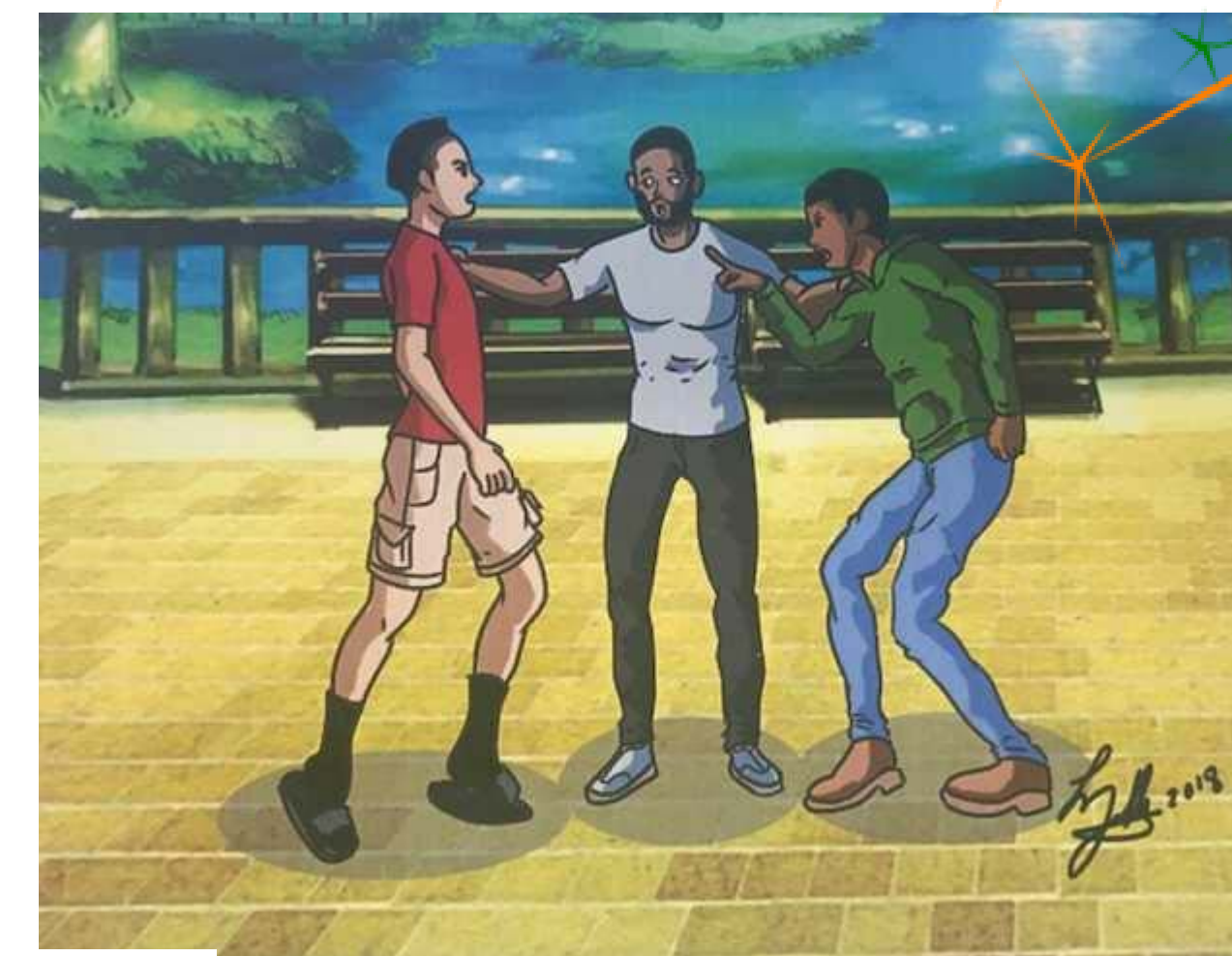
As a result of the SPARK Literacy Project:

- Student Success has increased in the area of student engagement with other disciplines across Pathways, and several literacy projects were created
- Students' post assessment literacy scores increased, as is evidenced by their class test scores, and has thereby increased student retention and completion
- Students participating in the SPARK Literacy Project have developed and demonstrated proficiency in writing, basic literacy and verbal skills by using authentic creative expressions including works of art, dance, creating a reader’s theatre script, dramatizing the script, creative movement, artistic expression and creating their own short story with 80% accuracy as assessed by a teacher made rubric.

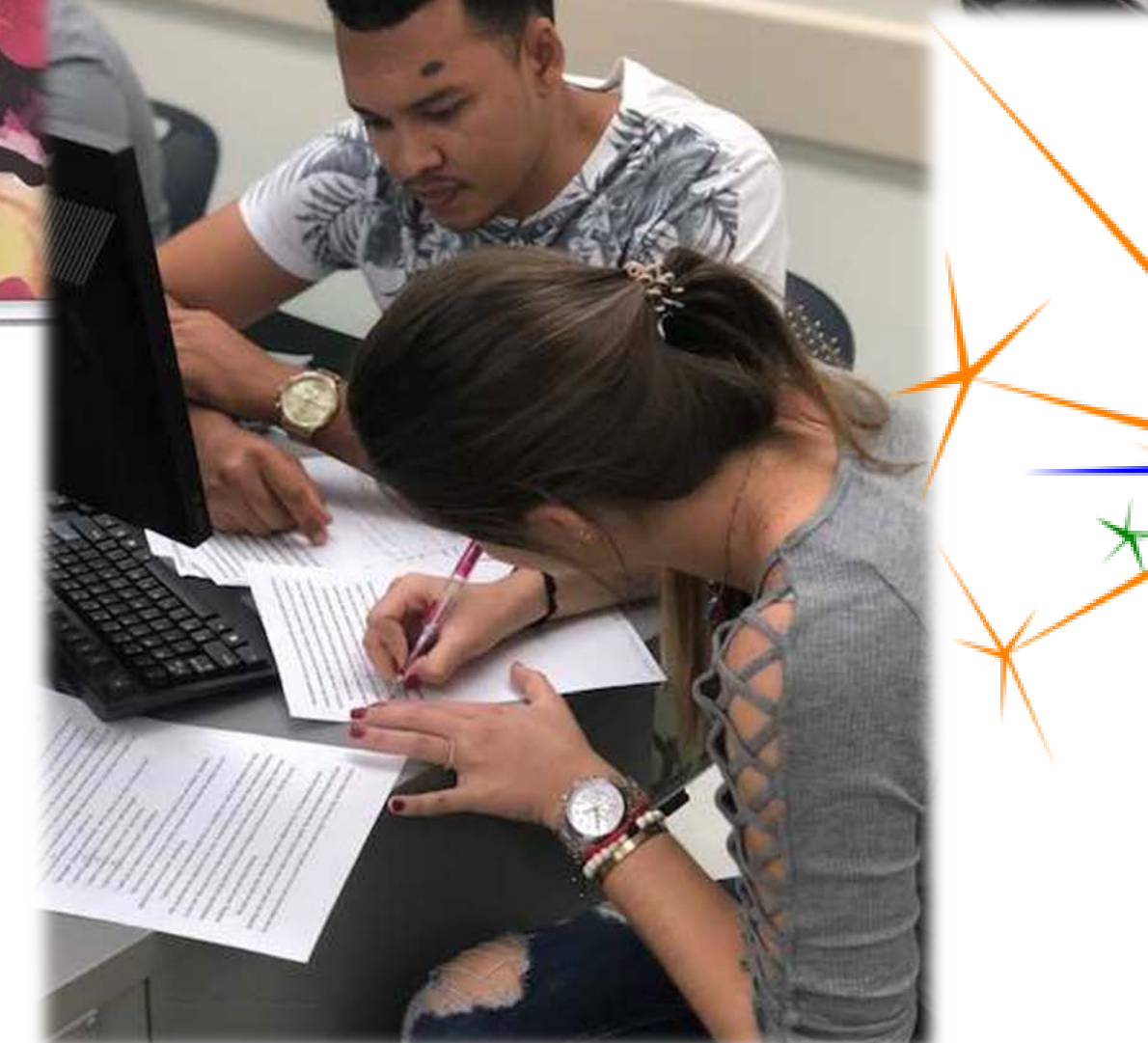
Strategies

- We recruited faculty members across the curriculum and pathways to partner with our classes. Our students in the Reading, EAP and English classrooms were given the opportunity to choose a focus area: Speech, Computer Science, Art, Theatre or Dance. After reading, “Everyday Heroes” and working with mentors from the chosen disciplines, students created a capstone project. The project counted as 15% of their overall grade.

Capstone Project



Daggy Dorizard, North Campus



Results

100 students responded to the following statements using a rating scale of 0-5	Student average rating (Scale of 0-5)
Participating in the SPARK (Everyday Heroes) project has improved my ability to express myself through writing and/or the arts.	4.71
Working with a mentor and/or professor during the SPARK (Everyday Heroes) project increased my motivation to be a successful student.	4.70
Participating in the process of SPARK (Everyday Heroes) project helped ensure my success in this course.	4.53
Participating in the SPARK (Everyday Heroes) project increased my awareness that reading is not just an isolated skill, but a necessary part of everyday life.	4.66
Skills gained through participating in the SPARK (Everyday Heroes) project have provided me with the proper mindset and abilities to successfully complete future college courses.	4.66

Strongly disagree ☆ Disagree ☆ Neutral ☆ Agree ☆ Strongly agree ☆

Conclusion

The SPARKS Literacy project integrated the cognitive, motivational, and social theories of reading, also referred to as the *Engagement Perspective* (Baker, 1996). The engagement perspective views readers as motivated, strategic, knowledgeable, and socially interactive” (Baker, xv). Engaged readers utilize knowledge gained from their literacy experiences in order to generate new understandings and participate in meaningful social interactions. Many motivation theorists propose that individuals’ competence and efficacy beliefs, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and purposes for achievement all play a crucial role in educational success (Bandura, 1997). Through this project it was proven that students were more motivated and performed better in the course.

References

- National Assessment of Individual Progress: Nation’s Report Card. (2017, September 29). Retrieved from <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>
- Baker, L., Afflerbach, P., & Reinking, D. (1996). Developing engaged readers in school and home communities: An overview. In L. Baker, P. Afflerbach & D. Reinking (Ed.), *Developing engaged readers in school and home communities* (pp. xiii–xxvii). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman