

HONORS IN ACTION PROJECT PLANNING AND REFLECTION MODEL

This worksheet is designed to complement an Honors in Action Journal (see page 5 of the 2010/2011 Honors Program Guide) and to prepare the chapter to submit Hallmark Awards entries.



**The Phi Theta Kappa Experience:
Honoring Scholars,
Building Servant Leaders**

SAMPLE MODEL

ISSUE

What issue and/or study question of the current Honors Study Topic did you select?

Issue # 5: Education- What is the relationship between information and education?

Study question # 8: As technological literacy becomes more important in education, who is left behind? What are the ramifications?

Why did you select this issue?

To participate in the Carolinas Regional Honors in Action project, this study question was chosen to better understand the disparity that may exist in the educational experience of children of all socioeconomic statuses in order to positively impact those negatively affected due to their inferior economic situation. We see the need to create a constructive environment to increase their future opportunities by improving their current learning experiences and opportunities.

RESEARCH SOURCES

What academic publications and experts will you consult? (A minimum of 8 is recommended.) Write a brief description of each source in your journal.

- 1. Test, Punish, and Push Out: How “Zero Tolerance” and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth Into the School-To-Prison Pipeline (Advancement Project)-*
- 2. Defining and Redirecting a School-To-Prison Pipeline (Johanna Wald and Daniel Losen)*
- 3. How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom (Thomas Armstrong)-*
- 4. Bridging the Second Digital Divide: What can Sociologists of Education Contribute? (G. Natriello)*
- 5. Technology In Schools: Suggestions, Tool, and Guidelines for Assessing Technology in Elementary and Secondary Education (US Dept of Education)*
- 6. 2008-2009 Third Grade Standards- South Carolina*
<http://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/taylorse/Academic%20Learning%20Content/Third%20Grade%20Standards%20for%2008%2009.pdf>
- 7. School Report Card South Conway Elementary*
<http://ed.sc.gov/topics/researchandstats/schoolreportcard/2009/elementary/comprehensive/e2601045.pdf>
- 8. Building Teachers: A Constructivist Approach to Introducing Education*

9. *Lyndsey Pritchard- professor of education Horry Georgetown Technical College & Coastal Carolina University*
10. *Nanci Howard-professor of education Horry Georgetown Technical College & Coastal Carolina University*
11. *Jon Ozmint as the Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC)*

What needs did you discover through your research? How did your investigation lead to ideas for an Honors in Action Project?

We discovered that our local school district has 26 elementary schools; 16 receive Title I funding from the federal government meaning they have high percentages of low income students. Horry County Schools has 60.1% of its students who participate in the subsidized meal program. The region project focuses on third graders and we determined, based upon this statistic 1662 of the 2765 third grade students in our district qualified for subsidized meals, and meet at least one “at-risk” factor. We also discovered schools in our district are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). According to Horry County School’s report card, “As required by the United States Department of Education, Adequate Yearly Progress specifies that the statewide target is met for "All Students" and for the following subgroups: Racial/Ethnic, Subsidized Meals, Disability, and Limited English Proficiency in the areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as meeting the statewide target for "All Students" for attendance or graduation rate.” Schools in our district are failing to meet this federal standard and further research indicated South Conway Elementary School (SCES), which is within a five mile radius of our main campus, has consistently failed to meet AYP. Last year the school was placed under Corrective Action for failing to meet standards for four consecutive years. We learned SCES has 221 of its 279 third – fifth graders (79.2%) who qualify for the subsidized meal program; implying 68 of 86 third graders meet at least one “at-risk” criterion. Due to their high participation in the meal plan and continuous poor performance a “breakfast in the classroom” program was initiated in the school. Every student in the school is provided with breakfast at their desk to begin their school day to ensure the basic need of nourishment is satisfied. This year their passing scores increased and they met, twenty of twenty-one objectives giving them an overall rating of “average.” However 1.7% of classes are not taught by “highly qualified” teachers, this is affecting student performance as is demonstrated by test scores, 36.4 % of third graders did not meet English/Language Arts standards and 26.8% of third graders did not meet writing standards. These test scores showed a large “at risk” population in our youth. Additional research indicated techniques which take into account multiple intelligences and learning styles, by adjusting lesson plans to incorporate different techniques student performance will improve as more students meet standards. These discoveries led our chapter discussions into the direction of “adopting” the third graders of South Conway Elementary. Proposals to tutor and mentor were incorporated as a significant part of the “adoption” project, as was a school supply drive and fundraiser to provide educational technology and training for the classrooms.

THE BASICS

Project Title? “SOS: Save Our Students”

Where and when will the project take place?

On September 14th we will provide an educational forum on the Conway campus during the scheduled Student Activity Hour. Our forum will be for faculty and students and will present the findings of our research to include the impact on our community if local schools continue to not meet the educational needs of students, learning styles, and the Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI). We will highlight the significance of a varied approach to education by providing attendees the opportunity to take learning style and MI tests; this will illustrate the variety of learning styles and intelligences on our campus. Demonstrating how the same lesson can be adapted to address different styles and intelligences we will show a simple way to overcome barriers. We will close the forum with a brief explanation of our “adoption” which we will use to introduce our school supply drive. We will place collection boxes in the student and faculty lounges and in the common area outside the campus bookstores. The collection boxes will be in place September 14 – 21 and December 6 – 17, 2010.

Who is your targeted audience?

Students & faculty of Horry Georgetown Tech and the students and faculty of third grade at South Conway Elementary

With whom will you collaborate?

Local school district and elementary school, other student organizations on campus (education department), local businesses, SCES PTO, Coastal Carolina University-Spadoni College of Education

Will you form committees? If so, describe them.

Yes: 1) research- to determine the information to share on campus and identify the school that would best be served by our efforts 2) volunteer-to solicit enough volunteers to properly man collections and to present information 3) PR- to ensure advertising is implemented effectively 4) design-to help make posters, decorate collection boxes and presentation booth 5) Fundraising- will develop and implement strategies for collecting donations to support the project 6) project executive- the chairperson of each individual committee will work with the officer team and advisor(s) to ensure the project is progressing in a timely manner that will allow for its success

Have appropriate permissions been attained? Y (List steps taken in your Honors in Action Journal)

Describe the leadership roles and actions this project will require.

Each committee will require a chairperson who will be held accountable for the success of individual committees; if a chairperson becomes incapacitated the committee will elect a new chair. These chairpersons will form an executive committee which will work with the officer team and the advisors, this executive committee will be directed by a chairperson elected by the committee. The officer team and chapter advisors will be a support/advisory network for the project committees. Individual committees will have committee meetings and the executive committee will meet to exchange information, the executive chair will be responsible for presenting information/opportunities to the general membership. The membership will have the final decision making power which will be executed by votes. Additionally student presenters and tutors will be needed.

What specifically will you do to develop the leadership skills and capacity of chapter members and others?

Chapter members will speak with the student body, faculty, and administration through meetings and a formal presentation. Chapter members will also speak with members of the community (school district and business) while soliciting assistance for the project. To ensure our members are prepared, the officer team and advisors will provide a leadership development workshop. This workshop will incorporate teambuilding exercises, public speaking lessons, and organization/time management exercises. Chapter members will enhance their skills to prepare them for the various roles they will undertake working on this project and future endeavors. Chapter members will be given the opportunity to share their skills as mentors to the youth of the community.

What is the action (Service) component of this project? (Action can also include advocacy.)

The chapter will “adopt” all of the third grade classes of a local Title I school and serve as mentors, tutors, and classroom assistants. Chapter members will hold a school supply drive to be given to the “adopted” classes in December to ensure they have a fresh start for the second term of school. The chapter will collect donations from members to fulfill “book wish lists” for the third graders; we will purchase the books from the school book fair under the advice of the third grade teachers. The books will be given to the children as gifts during a winter holiday party. The school supplies will be given to the teachers during the party. The chapter will fundraise and solicit donations to provide listening stations in “our” classes. We will assist the teachers in registering for Donorschoose.org, an online charitable organization which connects potential donators with classes in need. The chapter will provide an educational forum on campus that will explain the ramifications if we continue to allow our third graders to fail.

How will the chapter publicize the project?

The PR committee is responsible for publicity and will hang posters on campus, advertise on the school website, write letters to faculty asking them to encourage their students to participate by donating money or supplies, and hand out fliers during campus activity hour presentation.

RESOURCES

Estimated funds required for the completion of this project: \$25.00 (at most for supplies)

Itemized Budget:

Posters-\$5.00

Decorations-\$5.00

Markers-\$5.00

(The chapter hopes there will be no cost and all supplies will be donated.)

Boxes-\$10.00

What resources are needed? How will they be acquired?

The chapter will need supplies to decorate collection boxes, and to make posters. Student speakers for the educational forum will be needed. Supplies will either be donated or purchased by the chapter; speakers will be solicited from chapter members, school faculty, and/or local schools or the school district.

GOALS

List the specific project goals.

- 1) The chapter will Identify the most at-risk third grade classes in one school in our District and “adopt” the third grade of a local Title I school
- 2) The chapter will provide one hour of intervention per class each week for 26 weeks
- 3) Collect enough school supplies for the second half of the academic year for 90 third grade students.
- 4) The chapter will raise awareness of the long-term effects of early schooling successes and failures in our community.
- 5) The chapter will raise \$500 to buy 90 books for the students.
- 6) The chapter will raise \$500 toward the purchase of four CD/MP3/Cassette listening centers for the classes.

How did you determine your goals?

After presenting the initial findings of the research committee to the entire project committee, committee members brainstormed to identify critical needs and key opportunities. During the next general membership meeting the initial research was presented along with the results of the committee’s brainstorming. The chapter voted to decide, which goals and project ideas they wanted to implement. The six with the most votes were adopted for use.

Which Five Star Chapter Development Plan requirements does this project satisfy?

Two Star- # 7; Three Star #'s 1-4; Four Star # 2-c, #3

IMPACT (Include participants’ quotes and more detailed outcomes in your Honors in Action Journal.)

What specific quantitative and qualitative outcomes resulted from your work on this project?

The chapter collected \$800.00 to purchase technology for the classrooms, \$600.00 for books, and 8 twenty gallon tubs filled with traditional school supplies (this was enough to provide each third grader with supplies to successfully complete the school year). The chapter created enough interest in early school success to provide 2 tutors/mentors for each third grade class in the adopted school and provided 165 volunteer hours at “our” school. Our on campus educational forum had 83 attendees that consisted of both students and faculty. We were asked by the third grade teachers to present our educational forum to the parents of the third grade classes we had “adopted.” We were excited when 60 parents joined us to learn how we can all work together to help their children. Through our forums we were able to bring awareness to a critical issue that plagues our community. During the research and implementation of the project we established solid connections with each other, the campus, and the community. Our networking with the Spadoni College of Education provided three members, who are future educators, the opportunity to participate in summer internships with Coastal Carolina University and Horry County Schools. The principal of SCES and the PTO president contacted local media about our project. The local news channel featured a human interest story on our chapter and the “good works” of student organizations at HGTC.

What impact did the Honors in Action Project have on your ...

Chapter:

During the research and implementation of the project chapter members took on leadership roles that surpassed their comfort zones. They are more confident in their ability to speak in public and the business community; this encouraged them to continue advocating for the youth of our community. Other members were inspired by the enthusiasm and growth of the committee members and have volunteered for other project committees. Members went into the community and spoke with businesses, the local school district, and a local PTO. The chapter established relationships with other student organizations on campus and with Coastal Carolina University; these relationships have opened the door for future collaborations. As conflicts and obstacles arose members relied on teambuilding strategies, learned during our teambuilding workshop, for resolutions.

College:

Students on campus were provided the opportunity to increase their school success by determining their personal intelligence and learning styles. Throughout the semester chapter members were approached by fellow students who expressed their gratitude in helping them in discovering study methods for either themselves or a family member. The faculty of the Early Care and Education department has requested the chapter to present our educational forum to their students as an additional lesson on the diversity of modern classes. Diversity does not have to be based on physical or cultural characteristics and our research on learning demonstrates another form of diversity.

Community:

Working with a local elementary school provided an opportunity for our chapter to have a lasting impact on the future of our community by acting as mentors to “our” students we have set the example to be servant leaders and lifelong learner. After presenting our forum to the parents of the third graders, we were approached by the principal and the president of the school PTA to present our research during the October PTA meeting. Presenting to the PTO offered an opportunity to reach children of all ages; our chapter has now “adopted” the school rather than only the third grade. Our third graders are excited, as are we, because we will continue to work with them.

Region and/or Beyond the Region:

Participating in the region’s Honors-In-Action project gave us the opportunity to work with chapters throughout the region to make a difference in the educational experience of elementary students in the Carolinas region. During regional events our chapter talked with other chapters to compare ideas and strategies. Friendships were established through these conferences that have continued to this day, and as a consequence the region has grown stronger.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

What is left undone? What opportunities remain for the future?

One opportunity to further our project would be to address “zero tolerance” policies. Our research indicated a correlation between school discipline practices and low test scores. Under the “zero tolerance” policy stringent disciplinary actions are taken on first time offenders and on small infractions. These actions remove children from the classroom causing them to miss vital instructional time. The chapter would like to investigate this in depth. We are considering lobbying legislature to review discipline policies which are negatively impacting the education of our community youth. Our research also discovered the lack of “highly qualified” teachers in our school district. South Conway has 1.7% of its classrooms being taught by these substandard teachers. Often these teachers have been in the classroom for several years and need recertification. We are fortunate to have a local university with a College of Education. The chapter is looking into establishing a scholarship program to assist teachers in our district to enroll in this program to improve the quality of teachers in the classrooms. A third opportunity stemming from our research is the “digital divide.” This is a disparity in the access and availability of technology. Children are often exposed to and expected to use computers for school assignments. Unfortunately there is an assumption the children can easily access computers outside of school. In areas with large numbers of children living in poverty this is not the case. Therefore the children are unable to use the skills learned or to complete assignments on time and this leads to them “falling behind.” We discovered a program called One Laptop Per Child/South Carolina. This program is dedicated to providing all students in South Carolina public schools with laptops. The chapter is investigating this further to determine how we can assist this program and bring laptops to the children in our school and district.

What recommendations do you have as a result of the lessons learned?

Re. The chapter learned many lessons about the Honors Study Topic we chose. Through our research we discovered there are many opportunities which we were unable to address at this time. We learned that even a small impact is better than no impact, but we learned we could make the best impact when we work as a team and join forces with other organizations.



Visit www.ptk.org/honors/guide for more information on Honors in Action.