"Wow! What an Experience!"

Engaging Preservice Professionals in Course-Related Research

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Why involve undergraduate students in research?

1. Enhances students' education (Katkin, 2003)

2. Offers students opportunities to translate research into practice

3. Encourages students to reflect on "real-life" application of research-based theory

4. Builds critical/reflective thinking

Why involve undergraduate students in research?

5. Teaches critical thinking skills instead of passive consumerism of others' research findings

6. Facilitates growth in self-determination (Cornett, 1990)

Collaborative Investigative Model (Dotterer, 2002)

- Central premise: formation of a collaborative enterprise between professor and student

- Usually involves individual students but can be a group (as in our projects).

10 Qualities of Outstanding Undergraduate Research

1. Respect for diverse talents and learning styles
2. High expectations
3. Synthesis of experiences
4. Ongoing practice of learned skills
5. Integration of education and experience
6. Active learning
7. Assessment and prompt feedback
8. Collaboration
9. Adequate time on task
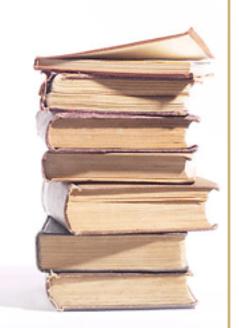10. Out-of-class contact with faculty member

Four-step Learning Process

1. Identify and understand a disciplinary or interdisciplinary methodology

2. Identify a concrete investigative problem

3. Carry out an actual project

4. Share the project results

Professor Responsibilities

- Formulate a research problem
  - IRB Approval
- Identify student researchers; assign readings
- Facilitate study participant recruitment
- Assist with data collection
- Assist with data analysis
- Be available for consultation
- Approve final product
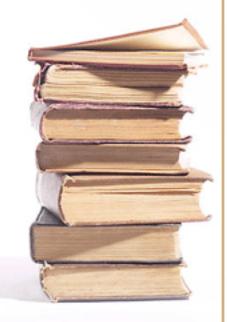- Facilitate reflective activities

Student Responsibilities

- Research question(s)
- Research methodology
- Literature Review
- Interview(s)/transcriptions
- Data analysis
- Summary of findings
- Poster presentation

Sample Projects
Relation to Coursework

- Hearing the Voices:
  An Investigation of Self-Determination
  of Individuals with Physical Disabilities

- Trust in Education Professionals:
  Perspectives of Mothers of Children
  with Disabilities

- Perspectives of Extra-Familial Parental
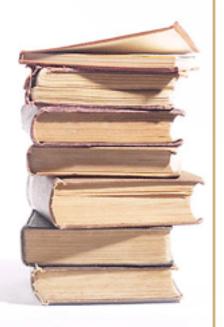 Advocates for Individuals with Special
  Needs

Themes from Student Reflections

- Knowledge
  - Students indicated they had limited knowledge or experience related to the concepts of self-determination, parent perspectives on trust, or parental advocacy before these projects
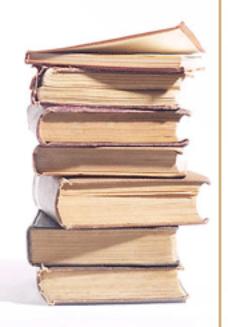
- Skills
  - Improvement in interviewing skills
  - Assessment and scoring skills
  - Increased awareness of the importance of promoting self-determination, establishing trust, and fostering parental advocacy in field experiences

- Performance/Disposition
  - All addressed how they would incorporate student self-determination, and promote parental trust and advocacy into their future classrooms
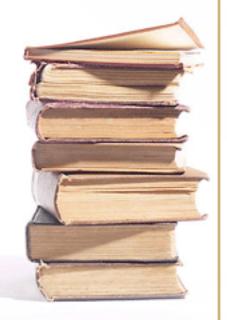
Students' Comments

- Added insight about going to graduate school
- So much more than just doing an assignment
- Taught me time management
- My ideas exploded!
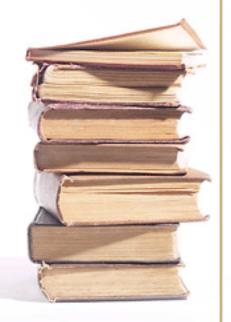- My ideas of education became much more than teaching students skills…

More Student Comments…

- My ideal classroom in my head has changed significantly
- Made me reflect on some stereotypes and biases I didn't even know I had
- It changed my views…gave me a completely different perspective
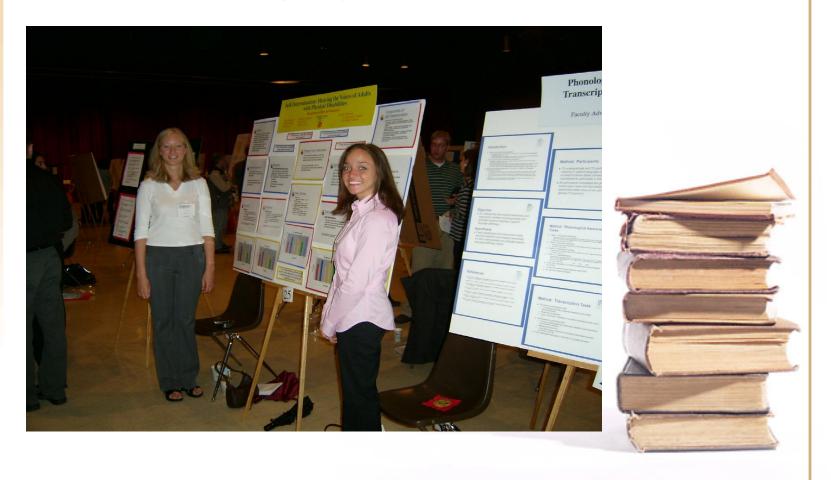- Not simply a regurgitation of facts from within the context of a tedious research paper

Student Comments (cont'd)

- It was an interactive, interesting way for me to develop a deeper understanding of special education and its implications in the lives of the people it affects

- Did much to validate the material we have been learning this semester
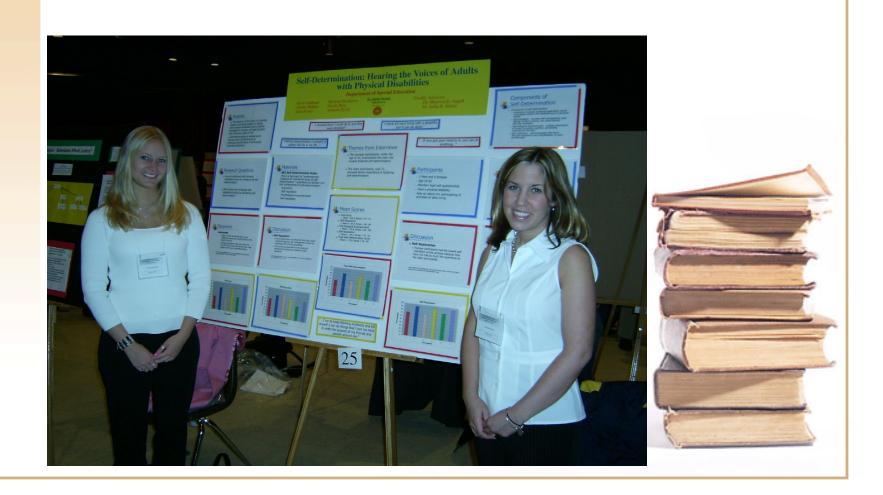
- …made me realize/…before this experience…

Student Presenters at Undergraduate Research Symposium

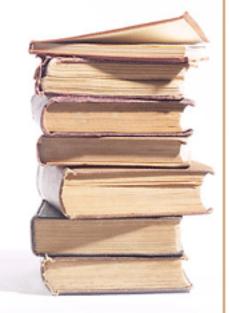# Student Presenters at Undergraduate Research Symposium

Student Presenters at Undergraduate Research Symposium

Identifying Research Projects

- Congruent with class material
- Must recognize time commitment
- Must get IRB approval prior to research project
- Topic consistent with your own research agenda
- Collaborate with colleague

Your Action Plan for Engaging Student Researchers: