

MINDING OUR BUSINESS

*Longitudinal Effects of a High-Quality
Service-Learning Experience in
Entrepreneurship on Alumni*



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DESCRIPTION

- MOB is a service-learning experience for Rider University students
- Rider students mentor Trenton public school students through the process of starting and running a team business
- Students are 2/3 female, ages 11-14, Black or Latino and poor.
- The course involves a class experience, a field experience and a training conference.



CLASS EXPERIENCE

- Three knowledge areas: entrepreneurship, mentoring and team management
- Team Learning (Michaelsen 1994). Mentors in their teams apply concepts in class and in the field.
- Reflection is where the learning takes place – weekly journal writings.



TRAINING CONFERENCE

- Mentors receive 20 hours of training at Weekend-Long Training Conference
- Mentors learn their role as mentors-facilitators.
- Mentors learn how to facilitate the 12 week entrepreneurship curriculum.
- Mentors get to know their co-mentors.



FIELD EXPERIENCE

- Minding Our Business Roadmap
- Session 1 Building a Team I
- Session 2 Building a Team II
- Session 3 Introduction to Entrepreneurship
- Session 4 Selecting & Naming Your Business
- Session 5 Pricing and Promoting Your Business
- Session 6 Advertising that Works
- Session 7 Your Business Plan
- Session 8 Business Plan Presentations
- Session 9 Getting Ready for Market Fair
- Session 10 Market Fair
- Session 11 Sharing Successes and Challenges
- Session 12 Visit to Area Businesses
- Session 13 Reflection and Next Steps



EXISTING RESEARCH

- **Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999)**
 - The effects of participation in college volunteer service persists up to five years beyond college graduation
 - Reflected in alumni's attitudes toward social responsibility
- **Warchal and Ruiz (2004)**
 - Participation predicted a greater likelihood of alumni choosing a job in a field related to the respondent's area of college service
- **Fenzel and Peyrot (2005)**
 - Student participation is positively related to alumni attitudes toward personal and social responsibility
 - Positively related alumni involvement in community services and service-related careers.
- **Hart, et. al (2007)**
 - High school community service is a predictor of adult voting and volunteering.



PRIOR RESEARCH ON MOB



○ Short-Term Impacts on Students:

Annual Surveys

- Become more interested in going to college
- Become more interested in starting own business
- Improved work/life skills

2004 Study

- Reduced school absenteeism & tardiness
- Improved self-esteem



PRIOR RESEARCH MOB (CONTINUED)

- Short-Term Impacts on Mentors:
 - Become more interested in community service and working with kids
 - Become more interested in starting their businesses
 - Significant learning: the students, self, team, mentoring and entrepreneurship



CURRENT STUDY: LONG TERM EFFECTS

- Method: mailed survey of 1997-2005
- Primary areas of focus:

Choice of a profession

Involvement with mentoring

Community mindedness & community service

Development of life-work skills



FINDINGS OF CURRENT STUDY

- Response Rate of 25%
- Attitude Toward MOB
Experience



COMMUNITY SERVICE

- On-going community service
- Increased empathy

Continued Involvement	Percentage
Community service in post-grad	62.3%
Members of community organization	31.1%
Members of a service organization	26.5%
MOB Experience: helped 'some/ a lot' in becoming more caring about the poor/needy	91.8%

IMPACT OF MOB EXPERIENCE

Skill Area	MOB Impact “some” or “a lot”
Team Facilitation	91.8%
Mentoring	88.5%
Leadership	83.6%
Entrepreneurship	77.7%
Communication	78.7%



EMPLOYMENT

	Percentage
Service Related Position	36.7%
Started Own Business	23.1%
Planning to start own business	31.1%
Plan to work with children/youth	50.8%
Important to have a career helping others	74.4%



CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT WITH MOB

Involvement Type	Percentage
Stay in contact with MOB	86.9%
Receive information on MOB	73.8%
Serve as a judge for MOB	42.6%



CONCLUSIONS

- Memorable quality learning experience affecting career plans
- Skill development: communication, team facilitation, entrepreneurship, leadership & mentoring
- Social responsibility toward low-income, urban youth

