

Community Partnership Report  
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A community partnership began in 2012 with Stockton faculty, Dr. Susan Cydis, Dr. Priti Haria and I, who worked closely with middle school teachers in Pleasantville. We taught cooperatively with the teachers, provided training in evidence-based practice and met the individual needs of students by analyzing formative assessment data. At the end of the first year, there was significant improvement in the literacy skills of the sixth and seventh grade students as measured by scores on an informal reading inventory and the ASK 6 & 7. In 2013, we expanded the partnership to include Somers Point, whereby I collaborate with two self-contained special education teachers to provide training on the implementation of evidence based practice and lesson plan design based on formative test data. Since that time, students showed marked improvement in fluency and comprehension. Drs. Cydis, Haria and I recently published a manuscript describing the program and results as well as presented a paper to two international conferences and one national conference. Service learning is also a component of this community engagement project. Students in my freshman seminar work side by side with the teachers and students by providing help with schoolwork and acting as role models for social skills development. Our Service Learning Office helped process the necessary paperwork for our students and as indicated by their reflective essays, their service learning experiences influenced career choices and future plans for continued involvement in the University community.

The faculty and teacher partnership strengthens two of Stockton University's strategic themes: learning and engagement. Collaborating with public school teachers has enabled faculty in our teacher preparation program to participate in continuous learning while directly working in classrooms with students and facilitating the ongoing learning of teachers in the field. The ability to assess outcomes and produce scholarly work aligns with Stockton 2020 Learning Objectives. The opportunity to deepen our relationship with community partners in our public schools supports engagement objectives. The

surrounding schools are our community partners and stakeholders, whose teachers participate in our graduate programs. Faculty, then, support them in their classrooms with research-based initiatives that foster teacher and student growth.

The research on collaborative partnerships and research-based instruction has resulted in one published manuscript as well as two international conferences and one national conference. More recently, I have written a second manuscript that was included in the Biennial Conference Proceedings of the International Association of Special Education. In addition, I have applied for funding from The Robert A. Mills Foundation to purchase improved formative assessment instruments and computer assisted programs to enhance the research-based instruction for students with special needs. As a member of the Somers Point Curriculum and Title II Committee, I submitted a Well Fargo grant to fund an after school homework program for at-risk students in grades 3-8, who attend Somers Point Schools. Stockton University's Grants Office facilitated the grant submission process.