

Refugees, Literacy Development, and Soccer

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TESOL, NEW ORLEANS, MARCH 18, 2011

Who are the Fugees?

- Refugee Soccer + program initiated by Coach Luma Mufleh
- Soccer as motivator, energizer, self-esteem builder
- Education and high expectation as essential components for kid success
- Students from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Burma (Karan), Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and so forth

Program includes (beyond soccer)

- Tutoring, Fugees Academy, Literacy Camp, Resources, and support

Research Background

- Possible correlation between physical activity and academic performance (Trudeau & Shepherd, 2008)
- Soccer as motivator and self-esteem builder as students work through writing workshops (Walker, 2002)
- English language regression of immigrant learners during the summer (Werner-Smith & Smolkin, 1995)
- How poor children spend time in the summer reading (Chall et al, 1990; Entwisle et al, 1997)
- Defying tracking phenomena (Callahan, 2005)
- Creating long-term self-initiating learners (Freeman et al, 2003; Levine & McCloskey, 2008)
- Research on sustained silent reading (Cho & Krashen, 1993)
- Self/cultural expression and personal writing process (Zaragoza, 1997; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000)
- Treating children as authors (Zaragoza & Dwyer, 2005; Ada & Campoy, 2003)

Outcomes

- Clear excitement to be there and to learn
- Improved perceived value of reading among students
- Increased awareness of content (Environmental science theme with focus trips: e.g., Water studies -- the water cycle, water monitoring; Reduce, Re-use, Recycle; Recycling Process)
- Content appeared in art projects, writing, discussion. Experiments passed from class to class.
- Notable non-regression in reading; possible skew toward significant reading improvement
- Many students decoding ahead of reading comprehension
- Daunting task lays before students: achieving grade level reading comprehension in short time
- Improvement in reported attitudes toward reading and time spent reading
- Qualitative evidence of writing growth
- Passages are highly contextual – if learner didn't understand content, didn't get passage
- Critical issues: interrupted education, health, refugees judged against native English speakers, linguistic puzzle pieces require more attention with older teenagers

Handouts and Resources

www.mlmcc.com (handouts)

<http://www.ericdwyer.info> (presentations)

More about the Fugees

<http://www.fugeesfamily.org/>

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