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Community University Project for Literacy (CUPL)

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Community University Project for Literacy (CUPL)

Adult Community Learning Centers, Adult Literacy and ESL Programs, Community Schools, Public High Schools and Middle Schools, Community Youth Centers, Harbor Point Community Programs

Summary/Abstract

The Community-University Project for Literacy (CUPL), now in its third decade of service, provides an academic structure for UMB students to provide 40 hours of service each semester as tutors at community-based learning centers while attending a credit-bearing seminar at UMass/Boston. Course offerings include:

- ENGL 284 - Language, Literacy and Community (Fall and Summer Sessions)
- ENGL 285 - ESL Tutor Training Seminar (Spring)



Approach and Students

“We learn to be confident and how to create a zone of comfort with ourselves and with our surroundings.”
CUPL Tutor

As the majority of tutors are ESOL students themselves, training is designed to encourage students to reflect on their own educational and language learning experience and apply this reflection to their practical experience as tutors. While students participating in CUPL in the past have mostly been first or second generation immigrants, in more recent years, a growing number of international students have enrolled in the program.

Community-Engaged Scholarship

“I was never the top student in the class, I was also bad at math and arts. But being accepted by those children gave me confidence. They let me know that if I put my heart into making a relationship with somebody, they would also love you back.”
CUPL Tutor

Over the past year, through a **Community-Engaged Scholarship Initiative (CESI)** grant, CUPL has:

- Expanded course offerings to include a Summer Service Learning Experience and On-line Course
- Strengthened its partnership and youth service component at the Walter Denney Youth Center located at Harbor Point
- Assessed project objectives through student interviews, written reflections, video discussions, pre- and post-summaries, journals, and final project presentations



“By allowing them [the students] to speak, they can learn more about each other and learn that they have more in common than they would have assumed.”
CUPL Tutor

Results/Impacts

“Now I feel more connected to the community.”
CUPL Tutor

CUPL has recruited, trained and placed hundreds of undergraduates from more than 30 countries, including: Albania, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Haiti, India, Iraq, Korea, Kosovo, Mexico, Myanmar, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Sudan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.



“When I said Goodbye to U, he turned and gave a big hug to me. When I went downstairs and stood besides Q, she quietly gave half of her seat to me. When I took a picture of J, he gave me the sweetest smile that I have ever seen. Those actions from those kids made me realize that if I put my heart to work with those children, they would also be glad to build a relationship with me.”
CUPL Tutor

Partnerships and Contact Information

CUPL has worked closely with more than 20 community-based organizations, high schools and after-school youth programs in local cities, towns and Boston neighborhoods. Partners have included:

Asian American Civic Association, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Brockton Adult Education Program, Centro Latino de Chelsea, Charlestown, East Boston and Randolph Adult Education Programs, Cambridge Community Learning Center, Haitian-American Public Health Initiative, Walter Denney Youth Center, Immigrant Learning Center, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, New American Center, Watertown High School, Quincy Asian Resources, Vietnamese-American Civic Association

For more information contact:
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