

Youth Education

Dr. Martinez

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Mixed Methods

After meeting with and interviewing Zach at the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Academy, we have a better idea of what we are working toward in the coming semesters. We asked questions regarding how the kids at the academy learn and what changes are feasible to their after-school program. There were many themes that emerged, but a few outshone the others. For example, technological advancement was one recurring theme. Zach said on multiple occasions that he'd like to utilize technology and potentially drones to help kids visualize these water conservation issues, "Drones! That's what I'm trying to get right now. We have a good drone program, it's probably one of my favorite ones. And I've been trying, begging and begging for a thermal imaging drone. And just no luck, no funding... I think stuff like that, that's easy for kids to understand, where they can automatically pull up a chart, I think is great." Another theme is activity characteristics for the after-school program. He wants these activities to be hands-on and science-forward. "I think water conservation hits a lot, and science. They're not the focus kind of test scores. It's really math and reading, right? So a lot of science and geography teachers are like, well, we need to read more. Or, you know, we need to get these terms so your reading scores go up, or we'll do the science that deals with more math so your math scores go up. I think science and social studies should go away from that." The last theme is what is important to these kids and what they take away when they go home. When thinking about what kinds of activities we'd want to incorporate, Zach wants us to make sure kids are learning about water but

also how they can make a difference and improve things in their own community. “Just from my office, I see deer, coyotes, skunks, foxes, turkeys, hawks, eagles, all around here. just necessarily. If you go outside, you can hear chus frogs right now throughout the summer, you love frogs, 24/7 because we're in the swamplands, right? We're in America's floodplains with the Mississippi, right? So that would be one thing, is theology, but that goes back to water conservation as well, because it's all part of it.” This was important to us and was something we didn’t consider when sifting through potential activities.

Our results relate to our survey because they reflect the responses that we received in our survey and compare to the opinions written by our survey participants. We do believe that the qualitative study aided in filling in various gaps that we expected. The qualitative data added a level of perspective that provided further context to our topics. It also provided a different view on multiple different experiences to elaborate on.

The results supported our initial conclusion that JJK wanted lesson plans that were interactive for students and could be used in afterschool programs or during class. The interview provided us with information regarding what type of activities we could do. JJK specifically wanted activities that involved students being outside and activities that involved urban ecology. The interview did not reveal any tension or complexity, we believe this to be an important stepstone in our information gathering to help aid. They provided us with information on how we can best help them with finding lesson plans, what they do to keep students engaged, and activities they’ve done in the past.

We communicated well with the teacher we interviewed, however we believe that in order to get more quality information we could have interacted with multiple different teachers. Doing so would provide us with more teachers with more perspectives, and more people to give

their opinion on the interview questions. The answers we would have received would be more diverse in nature. We could organize the information and compare it with a number of other previous responses, and possibly averaging out the responses to see if there was a common theme in the transcribing process.

This semester, we conducted our research using various mixed methods, including interviews, discussions, site visits, FaceTime with partners, and lesson research. Doing an interview provided us with a personal point of view from an after-school educator in JJKFan, with which we could better understand what they do and how we can add more activities, as we now have a visual view of what they do and the materials they use. The site visit gave us a physical view of their space, giving us a better idea of what we could do in the school, making it feel more real. The face time we have had over the past few months has helped us build a better understanding as we get deeper into our research on specific topics and activities that our partner JJKFan is looking to incorporate into their after-school program.

Overall, the different methods we have used in research have taught us how to interview and get involved with our partners, and visiting their school has given us new ideas that can work for their after-school program. Now, what we want to know for the future is to review our research and see if what we have gathered will work with our new ideas of a fun, interactive after-school program.