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Growing Together: A Journey to Self-Discovery

Alicia Mehtlan

California State University, Monterey Bay, amehtlan@csumb.edu

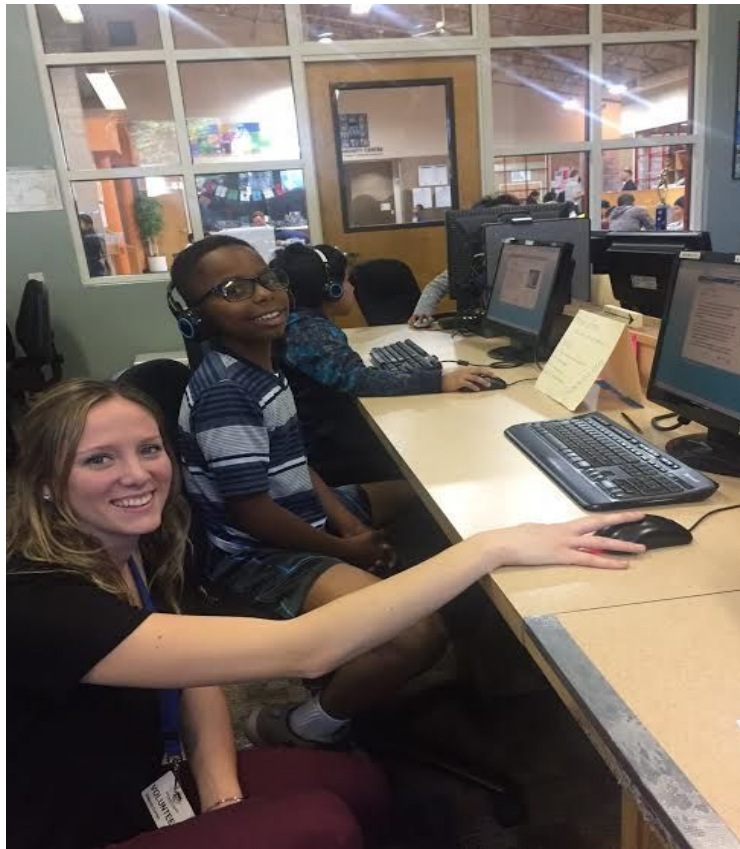
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HCOM 475: Senior Capstone



Alicia Mehtlan
Journalism & Media Studies
Section 2
Qun Wang

Growing Together: A Journey to Self-Discovery

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Growing Together: A Journey to Self Discovery

1. *Name and Area of Concentration:*

Alicia Mehtlan

Journalism and Media Studies

2. *Internship Site:*

I chose Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County to do my internship because of my familiarity with this site from my service learning and hope to inspire these children to always stay true to their own identity.

3. *Internship Description:*

Throughout the course of this internship, I will be reading with kids, ages 8-10 years old, and enhancing their writing skills. Multiple members of Boys & Girls Club are not fluent in the English language and struggle with reading and writing in the common language their school uses. I will be helping teach children of all ages about media literacy of all types by incorporating fun activities into finding themselves in the growing community they thrive in.

4. *Alignment with Common Theme:*

My internship is targeted for aspiring children who enhance their learning skills at this site while also learning to love who they are without any regards to their peers perspective. I will align the theme of identity with the overall unanimity the staff at Boys & Girls Club enforces in these students. During the process, I hope to help them find both theirs and my own identity.

5. Internship Site Supervisor:

Amanda Cook, Boys & Girls Club- Technology Center Supervisor

(831) 394-5171

6. Goals and Expectations:

My intentions with the youth are to expand their learning horizon and help educate on how much they can bring forth into the world. Creating a self image or identity for themselves and realizing who they are on the inside will actualize the reality of the world they live in. I expect to learn more about classroom management and my true passion for teaching thriving children. The motto I chose to stand for with these flourishing kids is, "Who you are doesn't decipher who you will be."

7. Next Step:

I intend to start this internship 22 September, 2016 with the technology center and will start training the following week. In the weeks to come, I will be holding my own interaction groups with the children as well as teaching small workshop groups to better their reading and writing skills.

8. Timeline:

The project consists of 40 hours which will be divided up throughout the week. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday will be from 2:40-6pm approximately and Wednesday will be 1-4 pm approximately. This schedule will change throughout the course of the semester due to sporadic alterations or school affiliated breaks.

September 22, 2016

This week was my first week and day of my internship with Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County. Thankfully I was lucky enough to start the day with four hours to walk through everything and get the hang of what I would be working with. Instantly I knew I was going to love working next to my supervisor from her personality coinciding with my own. The majority of my time this week was observing how the atmosphere was as well as learning what my jobs were. My mentor was not hesitant in any way in teaching me how the computer systems work, making myself an account and learning the ropes of an internet website called Read Naturally. Read Naturally is a reading site that helps the children become better readers; this includes: comprehension, accuracy and consistency. In order for each child to pass a story, a teacher or helper must listen to them read, read through quiz questions and answer questions they may need. The first hour of my work is solely to Read Naturally while the other three hours are dedicated to getting to know them through activities.

This semester, I chose to do my service learning class as well as my capstone in hopes to combine my knowledge into this one site. I took the media literacy we were taught in class to Boys & Girls Club with high hopes that these children would take the knowledge I provided them with in their growth process. I will be conducting activities and discussions with these kids to help them better understand concepts in the

world. I am very excited for the end results the Boys & Girls Club will provide me with the desire that my question of their self identity will be answered.

September 28, 2016

It was my second week with my internship site and already I can feel myself growing into their own community. Kids are wondering who I am and why I am there so often which only raises questions as to what they are eager to learn about me. There are rotations for each day with different teachers so I see a new kid everyday. I participate in Read Naturally with the kids for the first hour which is very rewarding and inspiring to see these children slowly get better and better.

My heart melted today when sitting down with a brown- haired, brown- eyed little girl who was working hard with her readings. I sat with her wanting to learn more without acknowledging that her first language was spanish. The little girl sitting next to her knew both english as well as spanish and was helping translate our conversation. She was very unfamiliar with english, but had every intention in learning to conversate with friends who may not speak spanish. She would read and sound out words, teaching herself to speak and read english to be a more social person. With the ten minutes I

was sitting with her, I learned so much about her and what her goal was with Read Naturally.

Boys & Girls Club instantly became an evident place that acted like another home for each kid. Some children lack the love and support they need to flourish and this club is that place to explore their inner self. All children attending the club have the freedom to express themselves within reasons of obeying the club rules. This place teaches them how to be respectful young adults and presents a path of greatness to follow.

October 5, 2016

This week my mentor has not been able to attend due to family issues so I was set back from teaching about media literacy from the week. I did however follow through with the Read Naturally program and was able to connect on a more personal level with the kids during other rotations. They were not set to do anything for the time being so I conducted discussion time with each of them while doing their online games. I was able to observe these kids from an environment that I hadn't seen. Since my mentor, Amanda Cook, was not there, the kids took the liberty in being more free with their actions than usual. What kid wouldn't if they had a substitute teacher present?

When walking around the room, I noticed the game almost all the students were playing called Friv. Friv is an online gaming site that is more fun than a learning objective. I found this site to be inappropriate for their age group for a number of different reasons. The women presented in these games are in a bra and underwear as well as wearing provocative clothing. They were putting makeup on these girls and dressing them into unrealistic outfits. The girls were having so much fun telling me how they can't wait to grow up and look like me and I was flattered, but at the same time, these beautiful girls were Hispanic and African American. It hurt my heart to hear them say they weren't as pretty because of who they were. When playing the game, they are being brainwashed on what beauty really is and being hard on themselves for not looking pretty now. It was a hard week that made me do a lot of wishful thinking in the end.

October 12, 2016

This week I attended Boys & Girls Club for 8 hours which gave me more time to work closely with the kids. One day this week, my supervisor was not there still and wrote on an email wanting me to lead each class in the curriculum as a start of my internship. I was able to lead each class discussion in such a way these children would relate making it easier for them to engage. I was able to connect more with the students due to me being one of the only adults in the room and they must have felt a sense of authority because they were just so honry. Many kids had more questions than usual and I was feeling a little overwhelmed, but I am glad they had to sense of trust to have me help them.

The hardest thing to do with these kids is creating a bond or a sense of trust with them. Doing this will make it easier to understand who they are and have them get closer to me through the simplest interactions. In order for me to truly understand what the Boys & Girls Club does to shape these kids, I need to research the type of people they want to be, how it affects them and if they believe it is possible. It will be easier the more time I spend with these kids to create the bonding necessary for my project. I am very excited to start next week's process in teaching these kids about the world around them.

October 19, 2016

This week again, I went for 8 hours and already noticed the kids were starting to be accustomed with me. Being that I go about 8 hours a week between my capstone as well as my service learning, I spend a lot of time with the kids as it is. Everyone says I look very similar to my supervisor, Amanda and it's funny because the kids accidentally call me Miss Amanda.

Over the course already, I have had a lot of appreciation for the Boys & Girls Club in trying to manage almost 250 kids everyday while still teaching them the requirements for life. The teachers like to connect with the kids and rather than pointing out children who may not be listening, they thank another student for listening to grab the others who may not. They try to establish a relationship with each student that is nurturing from a distance as well as keeping that boundary. I have been throwing around the idea of being a third grade teacher since I was in middle school and from this experience it makes me want to help kids find who they are from just a safe zone. I thought it would be a very good idea to intern for a place that would help me realize my true calling in life. I knew it would be a struggle to try and fathom the time each teacher puts in everyday which is why I was able to still teach with my supervisor and she went through her step by step process with me on how she does her lesson plans.

October 26, 2016

Boys & Girls Club was very interesting and heart wrenching this week. I stayed another 8 hours and some children got closer to me than ever imagined. Many of the kids that attend this clubhouse, do not have the most stable and supportive family lives. Unfortunately several kids are unable to receive the family atmosphere they are provided with or the sense of home they would like to encounter. One of the little girls who I have come to know well expressed interested in writing her father a letter. I asked why she wanted to write him a letter and where he was. With a sad look on her face, she replied saying he was in jail and instantly my stomach dropped. Due to me honoring the document I signed at the beginning stating that all relationships with the children must sustain a sense of boundary than I had to sadly decline her offer in helping. I showed her to my mentor, explained her situation and waited to hear the ending resulting of this letter. It was hard to turn down a child, no older than 6 years old, of writing a letter to their father who is in jail. I asked my supervisor about Jaden, the little girl's, family status and when she replied saying her mother has never been in the picture as well as her dad being in jail then her grandma has been the only real stability in her life.

November 2, 2016

I ended this week totally my hours to 36 which has lifted a substantial weight off my shoulders. Being that I have 4 hours left, I wanted to finish my hours before Fall Break so as planned I will attend the clubhouse next week for a total of 40 hours.

I had another great week at Boys & Girls Club educating them on the daily news media they see on television or hear about from their families. I also touched on tobacco and alcoholism which was one of the hardest topics so far. I chose to discuss this subject in such a way where I ask questions and they respond with their own stories or knowledge. I asked questions that resulted in how they know about tobacco, cigarettes, alcohol, chew, etc. and I asked how they felt. One little boy, Tyler, in particular raised his hand and said, "If I had the chance to have every cigarette and alcohol in the world, I would throw it in the garbage and light it on fire so my mommy never saw it again I would." Almost instantly after hearing this, my stomach dropped and knew I had to change the atmosphere in the classroom before emotions started flying. After that class session I asked my supervisor about his home life and she responded saying they called Child Protective Services seven times total from bruises, scrapes and marks.

It hurts my heart to hear and see such thriving kids who aren't given the chance to spread their wings from the non support give, Boys & Girls Club has opened my eyes

in more ways than one. One being that This after school program is more than just a day care for the parents, it's about helping the kids in bettering themselves to create a more meaningful life than what they have now.

November 9, 2016

The final week of my internship resulted in such a great success. I had an interview for Impact Learner job on Monday and was hired by Wednesday. I am so excited to start working at the Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County starting in January. This week was the same as all the rest, the first hour I help kids with Read Naturally and help pass and educate them on their reading comprehension. The second hour we are making traps for Cane Toads! They are learning about invasive species as well as doing research about some around Monterey County or in any place they choose. Depending on how the day goes or how busy of a day Amanda, my supervisor, plans then I get to talk about media or things that classify as media to them. The third hour is k-1st graders and because they are tired and cranky, my mentor puts them on a website called Starfall. This website helps them with pronunciation and their alphabets. The last and final hour of my day is doing any little activity to the room like straightening up cabinets and such. I never realized how tiring it would be to intern at an after school program until I sat down after every day and thought about how tired I was. Everyday is so long, but every second I got to see those kids and build on the connection we have is so worth it.

Alicia Mehtlan
12.8.16
Wang

My Journey to Self Identity

When I was 8 years old, I told my mom that someday I would be a teacher. Sadly I have no recollection of this moment and it was thought to be fate. In 8th grade, I was voted 'most likely to be a teacher' and despised my fellow classmates for thinking this to be true. I couldn't help but think *Is this real? No, I'm doing sports broadcasting.* The thought of being a teacher annoyingly antagonizes my head every now and again, but I figured I should have the chance to see where this would take me. I know sports broadcasting is the path I have chosen, but is there more?

Entering into my capstone, I was unaware of the journey this class was going to take me on. Was I going to discover who I was through an internship? Would I find my love for writing as I always hoped? Would I realize my hatred toward research papers? All these questions trailed behind one another, turning into a heap of stress when I found a theme involved. Identity. Identity was the perfect theme to go along with all the baggage I wanted to clear. All the worries of graduation piled up in wondering where I was going to be after May 2017. When finding out the length of both the research paper

as well as the creative writing, I knew an internship would be my set project. But where? If I wanted to solve the mystery of my career choice, I wanted to intern at a broadcasting facility or an after school program. Unfortunately broadcasting internships are near impossible to find close to Monterey so I decided to see where teaching led me. I didn't know what this afterschool program would entail, but if it was anything like being a teacher for multiple subjects than I wanted to explore this territory.

Over the course of this semester, I've had the privilege of interning at the Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County. Boys & Girls Club is a nonprofit after school program that dedicates all its time in helping students succeed in life. These life skills include: building character, manners, and how to manage their our life in the right direction. There are two clubhouses in Monterey County, Salinas and Seaside, that feed off each other in creating a more stable and fun environment for the children. According to the BGCMC website, "Part of the community since 1968, The Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County (BGCMC) operates two Clubhouses and several extension sites that serve an average of 800 children a day with high-quality programs provided by trained youth development professionals." Who are the workers and staff you may ask? Who are the people who devote so much time into these clubhouses? "Our staff and volunteers serve as trusted mentors and advocates for our youth, offering every child

opportunities, expectations, recognition, and guidance in a safe and fun environment.”

The amount of time and effort these workers and volunteers put into these children make the future look bright. The volunteers want to broaden their learning capacity by thinking critically and challenging them.

The kids who attend this after school program are looking for trust, stability and security. Boys & Girls Club is a safe place; it's a sanctuary for those children that struggle with their homes. Majority of these kids come from low income, unsupportive families and are itching for some attention. Whether it be good or bad, each child is learning the wrongs and rights of how to be when entering into the next stage of their life. The environment the Boys & Girls Club creates is fun! Paintings from the kids cover the walls with color, children of all ages flourishing in subjects they believe they cannot endure and finally, a lavender scented aroma of worry free thoughts. They built this clubhouse striving for a mission. A mission that shows parents, donors and faculty that these kids are the number one priority of why they work so hard. This mission is stated on every page of their website, “ Our mission is to inspire and empower the youth of Monterey County to realize their full potential to become responsible, healthy, productive and successful citizens.” This quote motivates me as a thriving student to be

more willing to partake in such an altruistic program that shapes our future generations.

I can't imagine all the other hearts it touched in motivating people.

I chose Boys & Girls Club for a purpose. A purpose being that I did my service learning at this site, but while being there for the time being, I knew I wanted to stay to do this internship with them. I saw a lot of potential in growing in their program and helping find myself along the way. Through the course of the internship I found myself laughing, smiling and enjoying the time I had with the staff and kids. I had a lot of fun and shouldn't that be the heart of your career? I wanted to find a job that was pleasing to my soul and one that I could wake up every morning excited for the new thrills of the day. I learned a lot about myself and what I would do if I were to become a teacher. I figured out how I would manage difficult scenarios, how I would develop my teaching philosophy, my my rom structure would be like, etc. All these things made me all too excited on where my life would take me after this.

For about an hour every week, I was able to work with the kids on media literacy. By definition online at the Media Literacy Project, "Media literacy is a repertoire of competencies that enable people to analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media modes, genres, and formats." Now I would teach it according to what I was learning in my service learning site. I taught them about what they see in the media

and how they perceive it. One of my most memorable lessons was on violence in the media as well as video games. I knew that almost every child in that clubhouse has seen a violent show/movie or has played/witnessed a violent videogame. I thought I could show them a video on how they interpret what they see on television into their behaviors after the fact. I asked them about how it made them feel watching it, what it made them strive to be when they were older and if they think it is a good idea to watch these things. Of course they answered back in ways I should have figured, but I got them thinking about what they watch and how they act after watching. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, "Children exposed to violence are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; suffer from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic disorders; fail or have difficulty in school; and become delinquent and engage in criminal behavior." This allows children to be at high risk of the majority of failure in the United States and it is all from watching violent acts on television. "A 2009 DOJ study showed that more than 60 percent of the children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year either directly or indirectly. Children's exposure to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, is often associated with long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Children exposed to violence are also at a higher risk of engaging in criminal behavior later in life and becoming part of a cycle of violence." The study they have conducted worries me

for the lives of the young adults that will be the face of this universe at some point in time. In order for them to see now what they are being exposed to and how it is affecting them, they will find their identity through the hardships of discipline. I think it is important to show these kids what the outcome could be if following the wrong path and this builds their identity for classifying who they really want to be.

Another lesson that I found to be very intense was alcoholism and tobacco. This hit hard to some kids about what their parents do and how it makes them feel. I held a class discussion on alcoholism and tobacco hoping they would express their emotions to me about how they feel. I asked, "How does it make you feel when mommy or daddy smoke or drink?" I got a quick response back from a small, redhaired, sweet boy that said, "If I could get all the cigarettes and alcohol in the world, throw it in a big garbage bin and light it on fire so my mommy never saw it again, I would." My heart throbbed and stomach dropped when hearing this little boy explain his feelings toward his family lifestyle. Instantly I could see each child was affected by this horrific drug that was put into their lives. Researching the statistics on how children's lives would play out if being monitored came back with positive results. The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth said, "Children were 46% less likely to be at risk of smoking and 41% less likely to be at risk of drinking alcohol if their parents did not let them watch R-rated movies compared

to those who were allowed to watch R-rated movies without a parent.” This statistic ties into both the violence in movies as well as tobacco and alcoholism. “Children were 28% less likely to be at risk of smoking if their parent always co-viewed R-rated movies with them compared to those who were allowed to watch R-rated movies without a parent.” What they see is who they will be if not told another option. I wanted them to know these people that work at the Boys & Girls Club want to help and are willing to do whatever it takes to help them succeed.

This internship allowed me to explore my self identity and who I was or striving to be. I found myself along the way in figuring out my chosen career path for the time being. Not only did I help myself find my own identity, but I helped several students find their own. They weren't trying to find an identity, they were trying to find a place to fit in. Somewhere where they belong and that place is somewhere they can grow in to be the person they want to. Explaining them the steps to take in order to succeed and walking them through their dreams has been an amazing experience. Being able to witness first hand the enjoyment these kids have dreaming about their future is so rewarding, but being able to work with them on getting to that place is even more gratifying. Self identity and self image are two key things we as the human race need to be comfortable in and finding that identity with children has been a dream come true.

Work Cited

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Alicia Mehtlan
12.5.16
Wang

Course Outcomes

Human Communications. In my own words, I would identify this major as *the understanding of human interactions*. When transferring from Junior College, I pondered daily on whether I would be well equipped for the courses that were included in this major until California State University Monterey Bay. CSU Monterey Bay requires specific courses to educate each student to their full capacity before graduating on a need to know basis.

The proseminar introduction course was designed to lay out concepts of human communication and decode the unwritten aspects of succeeding in the real world. Through this we learn the necessities, resources and outcomes of this major, with the help of our fellow classmates to take on our degree. The capstone course, 475, has contributed in identifying and differentiating viewpoints that best benefit all parties by allowing students to partake in an internship like myself. Interning at Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County has required me to instruct children on the influence of media as

well as how these children grow together and build character. This internship has allowed me to critically think amongst the children and raise critical discussion broadening their learning spectrum. These questions consist of their upbringing like: how their life has sculpted them into who they are today, how their family has influenced them to chase their dreams and how to achieve their goals.

Human Communications revolves around presentations, papers and compilation of literature. Many presentations and projects are done in groups that require group collaboration in meeting standards of efficiency at the professor's request.

Approximately this semester, I have worked in three different groups in different classes that entail my own contribution as well as time management with others. In Service Learning, HCOM 307s, we are given the task in working with our community in after school programs to retrieve a better knowledge on the other educational systems.

Through this we must collaborate with teachers and volunteers to create a healthy lesson plan these students will never forget. Working with ages k-senior in college, you develop patience depending on which group you chose to engage in. This process entails the understanding of who you are working with, what will help the group grow, what is a cancer, and always reflecting on how to become more efficient.

Looking at the dictionary definition for identity, it writes “condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing.” We value identity because it defines who we are, but it takes a lifetime of long journeys to find our true identity. Our capstone theme, identity, maintains the hardest part in finding who you are in growing up from ages kindergarten-fifth grade. I took the time to uncover children's lives who walk the halls of Boys & Girls Club in hopes of finding a deeper meaning of who they want to be. I have noticed through the activities held, some children only know what their guardians have taught them. Most haven't seen the variety of options in the world that is theirs to take! I have learned to glance at a child and instantly sense the life they have endured by behavior, appearance and confidence. Finding time to educate myself on each child has been both enlightening as well as disheartening from the misfortune brought to them.

“Growing Together: A Journey to Self-Discovery” exposes the adventure children take in finding themselves from the realization of how they perceive themselves. This capstone project highlights the true meaning of identity by decoding children's responses from discussions and searching for the right answer they think to be true. It follows the step by step process in meeting the published criteria and standards for assessment to succeed in the capstone course. Establishing the amount of time and

effort I have into these students has demonstrated my dedication to each child in assimilating their knowledge in self discovery.