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## Career locker for at-risk youth

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Professor Saxton

## **Career Locker for At-Risk Youth**

Keywords: juvenile justice system; juvenile crime rates; school bonding; school interest; career interest; juvenile delinquency

Abstract: While interning for the Santa Cruz Probation Department-Juvenile Division, during my Fall 2010 to Spring 2011 semesters, I was able to offer an on-line career planning tool program for at-risk youth. The goal of the Career Locker program was to increase school bonding, and career school interest to decrease juvenile delinquency in Santa Cruz County. The Career Locker consisted of assessing the youth's career interests to match those interests to a specific career, so that youth could explore different educational institutions that offered preparation for their desired career.

## **Executive Summary**

During my senior year I had the opportunity of interning at the Santa Cruz Probation Department-Juvenile Division. I was placed at the Evening Center program which is a program for at risk-youth in need of supervision, guidance, and support. The probation department offers the Evening Center as an alternative to incarceration. On a daily basis the Evening Center serves approximately ten youth. While at the Evening Center, youth obtain the following services: seven challenges, transportation, assessment, recreational activities, transportation, homework assistance, thinking for a change, Friday night live, and transportation.

Juvenile delinquency is an issue that makes communities unsafe, makes our governments spend money on incarceration, and makes families reject many of the youth. At-risk youth on probation face barriers such as alcohol and drug addiction, gang involvement, lack of parental support, and low educational achievement. School interest is a factor that can decrease the likelihood of having youth become involved in delinquent activities. By increasing school interest and school bonding, communities can make a positive impact on juvenile delinquency.

The Career Locker project is an on-line career planning tool program that addressed school interest and school bonding by assisting youth identify who they are, where they want their future to go, and how they can plan for their future. Youth were able to explore careers, degrees, and educational institutions. Five youth participated in the implementation of the project. Out of the five participants, surveys showed a positive change in four of them.

The Career Locker was successful in increasing school interest and school bonding by 20%. I would recommend for the probation department to continue implementing the career locker project, but to develop a separate computer lab and make the project mandatory.

## **Juvenile Delinquency a Social Problem**

Juvenile delinquency in Santa Cruz County is “one of today’s most pressing social problems” (Smith & Stern, 1997, p. 382). However, the seriousness of the issue comes from the consequences suffered by victims, families, perpetrators, and society. As Smith and Stern (1991) have explained, juvenile delinquency produces “negative consequences for victims and for society at large, as well as for adolescents and their families” (p. 382).

## **Santa Cruz County Crime Rates**

Juvenile delinquency arrests are broken down into two categories: misdemeanor and felony arrests. Juvenile delinquency arrest rates for misdemeanor crimes have been fluctuating from 1999 to 2008. In 1999 juveniles committed 11,137 misdemeanor crimes, in 2004 they committed 8,993 misdemeanor crimes, and in 2008 they committed 10,896 misdemeanor crimes (California Department of Justice, 2010). On the other hand, felony crime rates have been decreasing since 1999 to 2008. In 1999 juveniles committed 3,437 felony crimes and in 2008 they committed 3,003 felony crimes (California Department of Justice, 2010). Even though misdemeanor and felony crime rates decreased from 1999 to 2008, juvenile delinquency is still present in Santa Cruz County, yet there is still an opportunity for improvement. Juvenile delinquency in Santa Cruz County is a problem that must be addressed accordingly. The impact of juvenile delinquency produces profound effects on all of the issue’s stakeholders; therefore, we need to work on reducing delinquency in our communities.

## **Juvenile Delinquency’s Effects on Society**

The issue of juvenile delinquency should be addressed because it has been proven that “there is a correlation between juvenile delinquency and drug use, gang involvement, alcohol

abuse, and sexual behavior.” (Barker, 2010). If there is a correlation between all of these issues; then, we must address them because “substance abuse and drug-related crimes among youth often bring adolescent and teen offenders into the juvenile justice system” (Iguchi, Bell, Ramchand, Fain, 2005). Due to delinquency, other problematic behaviors and activities arise. Some problematic behaviors and activities that juveniles engage in are the following: drug and alcohol use, gang involvement, addiction, and sexual activity. As a consequence these activities and behaviors might lead juveniles into sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, arrests, injury, and death. Problem behaviors that cause a dominos effect on one another is not a positive phenomenon, especially when juveniles are being entrenched in the juvenile justice system. A domino effect takes place because “problem behaviors tend to cluster, the presence of one increasing the likelihood of another” (Morton, B., Crump, A., Haynie, D., & Saylor, K, 2010, p. 100). “All of these issues challenge communities by making neighborhoods unsafe”, so when communities are unsafe, the public spends more money on providing adequate law enforcement (Barker, 2010). It is costing tax payers in each state about \$49 billion every year to sustain juvenile corrections (McLeigh & Sianko, 2010, p. 334).

Delinquent behaviors are causing many of our youth to enter the juvenile justice system. The expense of juvenile delinquency was seen “between 1994 and 2000” when “the number of youth held in detention increased by 70%” in the United States (McLeigh & Sianko, 2010, p. 334). This 70% translates to having “about 100,000 youth in juvenile institutions per day across the nation (McLeigh & Sianko, 2010, p.334). A closer look at these numbers reveals that juveniles from our communities on probation or serving life in prison are not being included in the percentages.

## **Juvenile Delinquency's Effects on Families**

Juvenile delinquency is somewhat of an epidemic. It affects everyone that gets in its path. Families are one of the stakeholders that suffer the most with juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency promotes antisocial behavior that is defined by the crimes committed by juveniles such as: "running away from home and school truancy" which are crimes against "societal norms" (Smith & Stern, 1997, p. 383). Many of the crimes committed by juveniles are crimes against the rules imposed by society. The rules imposed on juveniles make their conduct and behavior change and turn against society and families. Once juveniles turn against their families, families begin to change. It is likely that this change is accompanied by a family developing negative attitudes that alienates their son/daughter even more. Research points out that families of an antisocial juvenile become "irritable, ineffective in discipline, and" often "withdraw their support and attention" (Smith & Stern, 1997, p. 387). These negative attitudes turn into a repetitive cycle. In this cycle, the juvenile's conduct and behavior affect their family by disregarding it; as a result, families abandon their son/daughter by withdrawing their support at the time when it is most needed. Once these families break apart and the juveniles do not have any supervision or support services, the responsibility is placed on society. Society pays when there are unsupervised antisocial juveniles without any supervision committing crimes in our communities.

## **Family is a Factor in Juvenile Delinquency**

Parents are an important part of a child's support system. Parents are supposed to be the most influential, supportive, and lovable entities of a human being's existence. Juveniles rely on their parents for all their needs because during a juvenile's age period they are transitioning from

being teenagers to adults. They need sage advice, even though they might not follow that advice. When parents do not provide a nurturing home environment for children to grow and be respected, and do not possess adequate parenting skills those children are more prone to become delinquent. According to Stuart, Fondacaro, Miller, Brown and Brank (2007), "Deviant behavior was significantly associated with less neutral, trustworthy, and respectful treatment by parents" (p. 676). Parents and society must remember that juveniles learn from their parent's actions; therefore, if they are not treated with neutrality, trustworthiness, and respect, they go in search of those needs out to the streets and may find those needs being met by the wrong entity, like a gang. Parents play the most important role in a juvenile's life and that role is a role that cannot be taken for granted because the juvenile's feelings, future, and life are at stake.

### **Low IQ Scores Leading to Impulsive Behaviors and Crime**

Low IQ scores have been considered a factor when it comes to determining juvenile delinquency. Low IQ scores serve as a marker for professionals to identify the causes of juvenile delinquency. According to Sperry (1994), "among kids who later became delinquents, low *IQ* scores are present well before they take up nefarious activities." These IQ scores are useful for society and families to understand how low IQ scores are a factor in determining future juvenile delinquency because some juveniles suffer from low IQ scores before they become delinquent. Even though low IQ scores are not the actual cause of juvenile delinquency, low IQ scores are directly related to juvenile delinquency. Low IQ scores might not produce delinquent behavior, but juveniles with low IQ scores behave impulsively because "they consistently fail to weigh the consequences of their impulsive actions" (Sperry, 1994). From the discussion, we can see how low IQ scores, impulsive actions, and delinquent behaviors are three factors that can have a domino effect by having one factor producing another until delinquent behavior is the final

result. Low IQ scores and impulsive behaviors might affect juveniles in many different ways besides producing juvenile delinquency. Juveniles in the future may encounter other barriers. They can experience difficulty socializing and even maintaining positive relationships due to impulsive behaviors.

### **School Bonding is a Factor in Juvenile Delinquency**

The school setting is an important part of a juvenile's life. Schools have a great impact on how a juvenile develops and influences their future and communities. School involvement should always be encouraged by parents and teachers even after a juvenile demonstrates negative behaviors towards school. Negative attitudes towards school "have been identified as modifiable risk factors for problem behaviors" (Morton, et al, 2010, p. 100). Some problem behaviors have been associated with the following "health and social outcomes": arrest, addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, injury and death (Morton, et al., 2010, p. 100). Problem behaviors will eventually lead our teenagers into juvenile delinquency and into an unknown future. Problem behaviors are serious factors that can be influenced by positive school involvement. School engagement is a habit that will give juveniles great benefits in their lives. If teens are positively engaged in their educational experience, they will have greater possibilities of becoming successful adults by obtaining better opportunities and they will be less likely to engage in problem behaviors.

Different factors like "low educational achievement, low interest in education, dropping out of school, truancy, and poor quality schools have been hypothesized to contribute to criminal and violent behavior" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). All of these factors must be addressed in our communities to decrease the chances of juveniles from engaging in delinquent behaviors.



School related factors leading to juvenile delinquency affect one another because if a juvenile has low interest in his education; then, that juvenile will be more prone to becoming truant and engaging in delinquent behaviors. According to Morton, et al., (2010), juveniles who have a positive school bond are “more likely than” adolescents that have a negative school bond to become more productive academically and “less likely to engage in” behaviors leading to delinquency (p. 102). Improving a juvenile’s school bonding and interest will bring short and long term benefits to the community, family, and the juvenile. Improving a juvenile’s school bonding will bring great benefits to everyone including our society and juveniles. Communities will be spend less money in our juvenile justice system by having more productive juveniles and our juveniles will be less likely to engage in problem behaviors that even lead to their death.

### **The Agency**

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department is a department whose foundation is based on its vision and mission statement. Their mission statement is as follows: “The Probation Department is committed to preventing crime and helping repair harm caused by crime” (Santa Cruz County Probation Department, n.d.). To accomplish its mission statement the Department promotes “community safety and health, offender accountability & opportunity for a positive change, justice for victims, and respect and fairness for all” (Santa Cruz County Probation Department, n.d.). The Probation Department acts as a leader and an active community partner to promote safety and build productive futures by holding integrity, excellence, compassion, creativity, respect, and fairness as its core values (Santa Cruz County Probation Department, n.d.).

The Santa Cruz County Probation Department Juvenile Division offers a great variety of services that include the following: community volunteer opportunities, mental health services, alternative school placement, positive peer groups, community restoration project, clean and sober classrooms, job mentorships, employment development and skill building, family conferencing, cognitive behavioral curriculum, drug treatment and assessment, and diversion services among others (Santa Cruz County Probation, n.d., p. 2).

The Santa Cruz Probation Department Juvenile Division is an exemplary site in the United States; as a result, it is recognized as one of five model sites due to the excellent implementation of programs that serve as alternatives to incarceration for low and medium risk juvenile offenders (Santa Cruz Probation Department, n.d.). These alternatives have made a reduction in the juvenile hall population of more than 50% while having a slight reduction in juvenile crime. The reduction in juvenile hall was done to reduce disproportionate minority confinement (DMC) because Latino representation in juvenile hall was much greater than their representation in the county's population (Santa Cruz County Probation Department, 2008). The Santa Cruz County Probation Department Juvenile Division serves "children and their families who are at risk of separation due to Court ordered out-of-home placement" (Santa Cruz Probation Department, 2008).

### **Aggression Replacement Training as an Alternative**

One of the alternatives I considered for my capstone project is the aggression replacement training (ART). Goldstein and Glick (1994) reported that "ART is a multimodal intervention design to alter the behavior of chronically aggressive youth" (p. 1). ART has three different components that include "skillstreaming, designed to teach a broad curriculum of

prosocial behavior, anger control training, a method for empowering youth to modify their own anger responsiveness, and moral reasoning training, to help motivate youth to employ the skills learned via the other components” (Goldstein & Glick, 1994, p. 1). ART is an appropriate alternative for my capstone project due to the variety of problematic areas it targets. Since ART is an evidence based practice, it is research based and has been proven to make an impact on a youth’s behavior. ART has been implemented across the United States and around the world in schools, juvenile delinquency programs, and youth recreational programs. The curriculum was designed for violent youth, but it was later modified to include children and adults.

ART will be a valuable tool to improve juveniles’ social skills, anger management skills, and to reduce aggressive behavior that leads to violent behaviors. By implementing ART, the department is addressing the aggressive and impulsive behaviors causing juvenile crime. Although there might be a link between low IQ scores and impulsive behaviors, ART is addressing the impulsive behaviors that are part of adolescence. Research on ART, points out that juveniles involved in ART “are far less likely to engage in a wide range of aggressive and high-risk behaviors” (Education Development Center, 2007).

### **Career Locker as an Alternative**

A second alternative I considered was the Career Locker program. The Career Locker program is a comprehensive, on-line career planning system for juveniles. The main focus of the Career Locker is to encourage users to develop and begin thinking about an educational lifestyle. With the Career Locker a user “can develop and maintain a personal “ILP/ePortfolio”; explore 100’s of careers and find out what colleges and universities provide preparation; via the link to “ASSIST”, identify courses that can be taken at the local community college that fulfill lower

division requirements at a CSU/UC; develop a resume and cover letter for their job search activity; build a “lifestyle” budget and identify careers that will provide the necessary income; and, can access Career Locker from any internet connected computer, password protected, 24/7” (Career Locker Staff Handbook, 2010). The Career Locker is considered an evidence based alternative. It is an on-line career planning tool designed for youth to become aware of their career interests and skills; discover and identify a career of their interest; and develop a plan on how they will obtain their desired career. According to the Texas Public Policy Foundation (2010), vocational training has been proven to be effective in Texas and across the world because through vocational education, youth are educated and trained in careers of their interest, perhaps finding vocational programs more interesting and significant than attending school. “Research has found vocational training for youth on probation to be among the most effective approaches to reducing recidivism” (Texas Public Policy foundation, 2010). Recidivism is a pattern followed by offenders in which they reoffend and recommit crimes. Many of these crimes ultimately affect juvenile delinquency rates. The Career Locker will be an effective vocational educational tool to reduce delinquency in Santa Cruz County.

### **Career Locker as the Selected Project**

The long term goal of the Career Locker program was to reduce juvenile crime rates in Santa Cruz County over a long term period of time. To achieve these goals I worked with five youth from the Evening Center. The objective was to increase school and career interest, and career knowledge by 20% by the end of the youth’s participation in the program. As a result, juvenile crime rates in Santa Cruz County will decrease and fewer youth will suffer from the different factors associated to delinquency. Increasing school interest and school bonding at a young age is accomplished by increasing youth’s career knowledge and career interest.

Since the Career Locker program is an evidence based on-line career planning tool that prepares, assists, and guides users to pursue a higher education and to obtain a career, my mentor and I decided that the program's outcomes benefited at-risk youth at the Evening Center. I observed that many of these youth did not have strong support systems; as a result, they tended to lack school and career interests. The Career Locker was the chosen alternative because the re-offending chances of at-risk youth could decrease if they were involved in a program that instilled educational and career goals in them. By noticing that many of the Evening Center youth were having trouble in obtaining a job in today's job deficient economy, I realizee that if I convinced participants about the difficulty of obtaining a job without a college education or career preparation; then, youth's career interest and school interest were going to increase and as a result their chances of re-offending were going to decrease.

Staffing for the Career Locker program consisted of Yolanda Perez-Logan, my mentor; the Community Restoration Project (CRP); the Digital Bridge Academy (DBA); and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE); and I. My mentor supervised the work being done with the youth and the program's progress. CRP which is a program that was created by a collaborative group that included the Santa Cruz Probation Department and other agencies was involved in the development of the Career Locker by assisting youth with the creation and development of resumes. The DBA collaborated in the development of the Career Locker by offering a presentation for youth on the DBA program, so that youth began thinking about attending Cabrillo College through the DBA program before they began working on the Career Locker. At last, the COE was involved by allowing the Evening Center's youth access to the Career Locker and providing the computers utilized for the Career Locker program.

In order to make this project successful I had to attend a training to familiarize myself with the Career Locker program. Once I became familiar with the program, I met individually with each juvenile at the Evening Center to instruct them on how to navigate the Career Locker; instruct them on how to accomplish the activities; and help them explore careers, colleges, and universities; and to upload resumes after they had met with CRP. I met with the youth individually, so that when youth utilized the program by themselves to update it, they knew how to make any changes. This work was done in the Evening Center's computer lab that was put together and was provided by early February after the COE's Alternative Education School moved into the Evening Center's room to offer classes for at-risk youth during the day.

Developing pre and post surveys, and parental and assent consent forms was an important step to evaluate the program's success and to make sure the participant's participation was voluntary with the consent of their parents. After developing the pre and post surveys, my mentor had to approve them to make sure that the vocabulary being used in the surveys was understandable enough for the youth to fill out the surveys without having any difficulties. Once the surveys were ready to be utilized, I set up a field trip to the Watsonville Cabrillo College campus for a presentation from the Digital Bridge Academy. The recruitment process for the Career Locker began by creating a power point presentation so that youth became interested in participating. The Career Locker power point was presented to the youth, the Probation Department's staff members, and CRP's staff members to have everyone learn about the Career Locker.

Creating a partnership with CRP was achieved by contacting them and informing them about the power point presentation and about having them help the youth with the development of resumes. Obtaining CRP's collaboration in the project gave me the green light to begin

gathering Career Locker potential participants, but before having participants start on the Career Locker program, I reviewed the potential participant's graduation date to know if the participants were going to have enough time to complete the Career Locker. Once we knew the exact time available for each participant to complete the Career Locker, I contacted CRP to inform them about the next participant, so that CRP had enough time to work with the youth on the development of their resume.

The Career Locker began for the participants when they signed and understood the assent forms and took parental consent forms to their parents for parental consent signatures. All assent and parental consent forms had to be printed in English and Spanish to make information understandable for everyone. Participants took the pre survey after all forms had been returned with the appropriate signatures and dates. The next step involved having youth obtain login information that included a username and a password created by the participants. Obtaining login information began the participant's development of their Career Locker program and e-portfolio. After obtaining the login information, participants completed a career assessment; reviewed the assessment's matching occupations and explored those occupations; explored majors and degrees that offered preparation for the explored occupations; explored colleges, universities, training and vocational schools that offered the explored degrees.

Participants were able to upload their resumes after developing them with the help of CRP. The ILP/ePortfolio was developed by having participants save explored occupations, degrees, and schools; and input personal information such as their name and contact information. Having participants fill out a post survey was the last step in the implementation of the Career Locker project. Gathering data through observations and surveys was the last step I went through to begin my evaluation process.

Access to the Career Locker site will be funded by the COE. The Career locker's costs are per packet. The cost is \$395.00 for up to 100 students and \$1,395.00 for a site license. Prices for the Career Locker increase as the package includes more students. If we were to find the price for five students assuming the packet included 100 students; then, the price is \$19.75 plus the \$1,395 for the site license which is a total of \$1414.75. The budget for the Career Locker project being implemented at the Evening Center comes out to \$1414.75 without including the money that went into buying the computers bought by the COE for the Career Locker implementation and the internet fee.

During the implementation of the Career Locker program I noticed many of the participants becoming distracted due to noise disturbances and other Evening Center kids being present in the same room. I had to deal with participants not being fully engaged at times and not paying attention to my instructions. In order to overcome these obstacles I kept reiterating the importance of the Career Locker's activities and having a well developed ePortfolio; yet, making the explored information interesting for the participants by making them picture themselves working in the careers that were interesting for them. One major obstacle I had to overcome was having the first two participants not complete the Career Locker. The first two participants delayed the finalization of the project because they began the development of their Career Locker, but we were unable to finish it. One of the participants did not attend the Evening Center after we began the Career Locker and the other participant's days at the Evening Center were shortened. Both of these situations made me modify my capstone timeline in order to finish my capstone on time. Having participants not complete their Career Locker was an obstacle I was not expecting when I began my project. Although I was not expecting this obstacle, I adjusted to the situation by making sure I finished all of the project's activities on time. On many occasions I



was not able to work with the participants as soon as the Career Locker was introduced to them. During these occasions participants were not obtaining their parent's consent, and this required the postponement of the project. I addressed this obstacle by asking the participant's for the parental consent forms on many occasions. The obstacle that most impacted my project was having control group participants not bring back the parental consent forms. I was unable to have a control group as a result of not having the parental consent forms for the control group and having a limited amount of time to obtain parental signatures. From the five youth I was planning on having for the control group I ended up with two youth. Having only two participants in the control group does not provide enough data to analyze.

### **Evaluation Design**

School bonding and school interest is a contributing factor that greatly influences juvenile delinquency. Along with low school interest, youth encounter other issues such as dropping out of school, truancy, and low educational achievement which can put a stress on their family and communities. Increasing school bonding and school interest will reduce the chances of having youth become delinquent and engage in delinquent activities. By instilling career plans in youth and providing them with a tool to plan their future, the Career Locker attempts to increase school interest and reduce youth's negative thoughts or perceptions regarding obtaining an education. The Career Locker will focus on having youth become aware of their career interests to know where they want their future to go. Developing a career interest will eventually lead youth into exploring the option of obtaining an education and attending a technical or vocational school, or college in order to obtain their desired career. Having youth picture themselves and plan a career path will hopefully get them involved in school and increase their school interest. Even though many youth on probation know they want to attend school after they graduate from high school,

they do not know what career they would like, which school to go to, or they simply need help to get to the school they want. Career Locker is designed to answer these and many more questions youth might have, so that they can perceive attending college in the future as an easier goal to fulfill. By assisting youth in career planning, the career locker is increasing school involvement and bonding at a young age.

Success for the career locker was accomplishing its two main goals. The first goal of the career locker was to encourage career exploration and career planning to prepare youth for their future. The second goal of the career locker was to promote educational plans and lifestyles to engage youth in their education and career plans. A project objective was to increase youth's school involvement and school interest to have youth become involved in their educational and career plans. Another objective was to assist youth on probation increase their career knowledge, so that they could make better decisions regarding their career plans and career interests. After the finalization of the project we expected to see a 20% increase in school bonding and school interest, and a 20% increase in career knowledge and career interest.

The criterion utilized to evaluate the Career Locker was an important piece of the evaluation process. Criteria helped me decide which evaluation tools were more effective and useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the Career Locker. Whether youth liked the Career Locker or not was an important fact after the completion of the project. The Probation Department took youth's Career Locker interest into consideration when making a decision on the continuation of the project. Knowing if youth's career knowledge, school involvement and school interest increased or decreased was the main criteria utilized to measure the Career Locker's effect. Changes in youth's thoughts and perceptions concerning the idea of pursuing a career were also

evaluated. Evaluating changes in youth's thoughts and perceptions pin pointed how the Career Locker affected youth.

I collected the data and information for the criterion by asking youth to fill out surveys. Before asking the youth to fill out surveys, I asked the parents for parental consent. Surveys were given to youth before beginning the Career Locker and after finishing it. I observed how the youth reacted and behaved towards the Career Locker program and I listened for any positive or negative statements. Observations and statements made by youth were recorded for evaluation purposes. Asking the participants directly about the experience, thoughts, and feelings regarding the Career Locker was another way of how I collected information for the criteria.

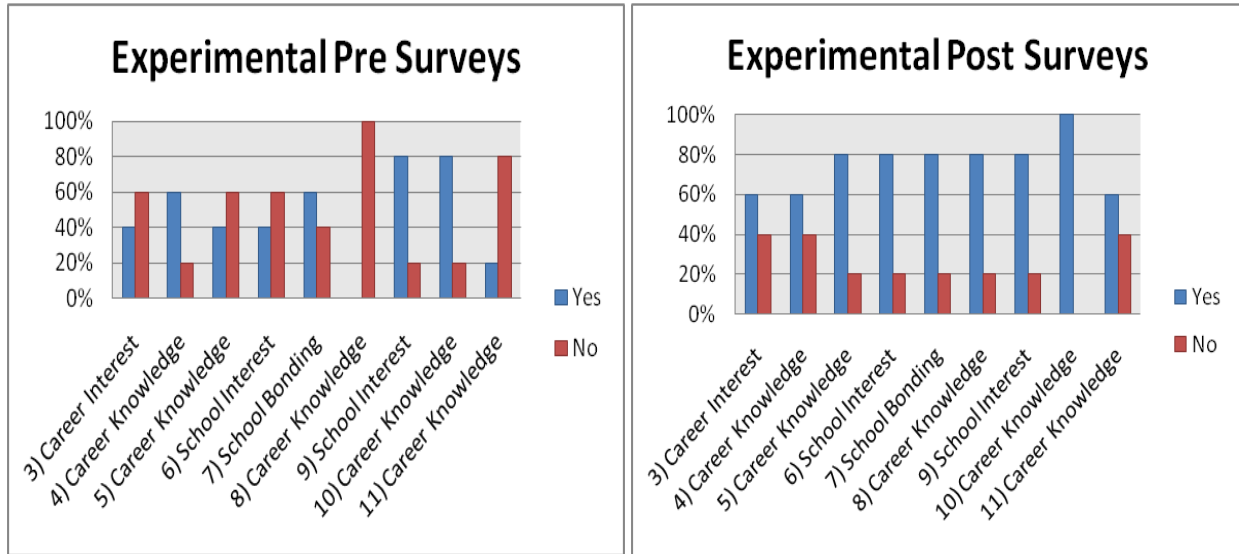
The evaluation design was one of the most important steps that were taken. The Career Locker's evaluation design consisted of an experimental group. The experimental group consisted of five boys that participated voluntarily. Pre surveys were given to participants after the youth and their parents signed the consent forms. On the other hand, post surveys were given to the participants after their participation. Pre and post surveys consisted of measuring youth's school interest, school bonding, and career knowledge. Having a pre and a post was an asset for the evaluation design because surveys showed whether or not the youth that participated gained knowledge and increased their school interest.

A downfall of the evaluation design was that youth that participated in the Career Locker were not being randomly selected, instead they were voluntarily participating. Participants were not being randomly selected because youth on probation are hard to work with and become irritable when they are being forced to accomplish a task. Many times when these youth become irritable they would rather not do what they are asked to do or they do not participate

enthusiastically. Another downfall was not being able to determine if the Career Locker was what increased or decreased youth's school interest, school bonding, and career knowledge because change to the criteria could have been caused by any other factors other than the project.

### Survey Results

Pre Survey							
Question & Variables	Participants					Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
3) Career Interest	no	no	yes	yes	no	40%	60%
4) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	I don't know	no	60%	20%
5) Career Knowledge	yes	no	no	yes	no	40%	60%
6) School Interest	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	40%	60%
7) School Bonding	no	yes	yes	yes	no	60%	40%
8) Career Knowledge	no	no	no	no	no	0%	100%
9) School Interest	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
10) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	80%	20%
11) Career Knowledge	no	no	yes	no	no	20%	80%
Post Survey							
Questions & Variables	Participants					Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
3) Career Interest	no	yes	yes	yes	no	60%	40%
4) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	no	no	60%	40%
5) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
6) School Interest	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
7) School Bonding	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
8) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
9) School Interest	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	80%	20%
10) Career Knowledge	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	100%	0%
11) Career Knowledge	yes	no	yes	yes	no	60%	40%



After the implementation of the Career Locker project, participants are more aware of the careers that interest them. Having participants become aware of their career interests changed some of the participant's mentality in regards to their criminal activities. One participant's mentality changed when he discovered his interests in public safety. While this participant worked on the Career Locker project he stated, "Now I know I have to stay out of trouble to get this job". Having participants express themselves in ways in which they realize the negative consequences of their acts demonstrates how the Career Locker addressed the participant's delinquent ideas. With the Career Locker's implementation participants are more aware of their educational and career goals. Some participants discovered that they want to work in the public safety field, tattoo industry, construction, and automotive industry. Resume development was a document that served as a tool to involve participants on their ePortfolio. By learning how to develop a resume, participants begin their preparation for job searching. If participants are better prepared to begin applying for jobs; then, they have greater chances of obtaining a job; as a result, the chances of having participants re-offend decrease. The DBA's presentation was a valuable resource for the Career Locker. Participants now know of a valuable program that can

serve them as a stepping stone to pursue their educational goals. Choices and alternatives regarding careers, school, and degrees were presented to the participants during their participation. This information will help participants make wiser choices when they decide to pursue their career dreams.

### **Conclusion**

From the data analysis we can see an increase in the participant's knowledge in regards to career interest, career knowledge, school bonding, and school interest. Question number four is a special question because the question includes an "I don't know" response. Question four asks, "Does your dream job need you to go to college or vocational school." If we look at the graphs we can see that question four does not show an increase in career knowledge because both the experimental pre and post surveys demonstrate 60% for the "yes" responses. This percentage remained the same because participant number four gave an "I don't know" response for the pre survey and a "no" response for the post survey. In the pre survey for question four I did not count the "I don't know" response. This means that on the pre survey the total percentage for question four is 80% instead of 100% because I eliminated the "I don't know" response from participant number four and I was left with four responses each one being 20%. Since three participants gave a "yes" answer and one participant gave a "no" answer on question four of the pre survey, my percentages are 60% of respondents said "yes" and 20% said "no". On the other hand, question four of the experimental post survey does include all the participant's responses which is why the total percentages add up to 100%. For the post survey 60% of participants gave a "yes" response and 40% gave a "no" response. On the post survey participant number four gave a "no" response. Now, if we compare participant number four's responses we can see that during the pre survey he did not know which educational institutions prepared him for his dream job and

after he filled out the post survey, he stated he had discovered that his dream job did not require him to attend an educational institution which means that he gained knowledge from the Career Locker.

Question number eight for the experimental pre surveys is a special circumstance because the graph does not show any percentages for the “yes” responses. No respondents answered “yes” for question number eight on the pre surveys which is why the graph does not show any percentages. On question number nine for the pre survey and post survey four participants stated that they wanted/needed help to get to college or a vocational school. For that same question the same participant stated that he did not want/need help to get to college or a vocational school. All the participants gave the same responses on question number nine which is why the graphs do not show any fluctuation.

If we analyze the pre and post surveys we can see that the graphs demonstrate an increase in career knowledge, career interest, school interest, and school bonding which were the Career Locker’s objectives. Although not all questions show an increase, the graphs demonstrate an increase because some questions that are placed under the same category show an increase and others do not. As an example, question number four should have shown an increase in career knowledge, but it did not due to participant number four’s response. Even if question number four does not show an increase, question five, eight, ten, and eleven show a dramatic increase in career knowledge. If we analyze question number three, we can see that there was a 20% increase in career interest. Question number six and nine are both evaluating school interest. Question number six does show a 40% increase in school interest, but question number nine remained the same. School bonding was evaluated utilizing question seven which demonstrates a 20% increase.

The results I obtained from the data analysis seemed to demonstrate very dramatic fluctuations when comparing the pre and the post surveys. Only having five participants is the main factor that causes the dramatic fluctuations. If I would have had more participants, the variations between the pre survey and the post survey would not have been so noticeable. Having so few participants makes my data less reliable.

At-risk youth benefited from the Career Locker by being linked to the DBA which is an excellent program that can help them reach their educational goals and as a consequence obtaining their desired careers. Linking youth to the DBA was perhaps one of the most beneficial opportunities provided by the Career Locker. Having the opportunity to create a well developed resume with the help of CRP was another opportunity that will assist youth with any job opportunities they come upon. At last, having explored careers and educational institutions gives youth a variety of goals and a vision that can help them stay away from trouble. Santa Cruz County benefited by having more youth that have thought about attending higher education institutions. The Probation Department benefited by incorporating a valuable program into their curriculum, A program that has been proven to work by addressing school involvement and school interest by promoting career plans.

### **Recommendations**

I definitely recommend for the probation department to continue the implementation of the Career Locker. Many participating youth have benefited greatly by identifying their dream job and knowing that education can help them obtain that dream job. The probation department has to be aware of the difficulties encountered throughout the Career Locker's implementation. I recommend for the probation department to develop and establish a computer lab separate from



the Evening Center's location. I noticed that when youth are around their peers, they tend to become distracted. Establishing a separate computer lab will allow the youth to work in a quiet environment away from all the distractions that take place at the Evening Center. Making the Career Locker mandatory once the participant has began its participation is a rule that will improve completion rates for the Career Locker. I noticed that having participants not finish the Career Locker was one of the major obstacles I encountered. Since I was unable to have a control group due to limited time and participants, the probation department should evaluate the Career Locker by having a control and an experimental group.

From my implementation I learned to work with at-risk youth. I noticed that many at-risk youth lack role models and as a consequence engage in delinquent behaviors. Working with at-risk youth is something that I would love to do after I graduate from CSUMB. I learned how to approach juveniles to build a professional relationship while maintaining boundaries. Being there for youth and helping them reach their goals is what many of these youth look for in adults. Pushing youth to become successful while assisting them in every possible way, helped me involve youth in the Career Locker project.

### **Application of Project to Academic Requirements**

In order to graduate from CSUMB, every student must demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities by completing the university's Major Learning Outcomes (MLO)'s. MLO's show the student's progress throughout the semester and at their internship placement. The MLO's I that I demonstrated through my capstone project were Statistics and Research Methods, Information Management, and Collaborative Leadership. The Statistics and Research Methods MLO was demonstrated due to the surveys I developed to analyze school interest, school

involvement, and career interest. I then analyzed the pre and post surveys for the experimental groups to evaluate the Career Locker's successfulness and make recommendations. The Information Management MLO was demonstrated by revising the youth's ePortfolios to make sure that youth only included good and reliable information that was going to help them out. Developing a PowerPoint presentation for youth to obtain their participation in the Career Locker project demonstrated my capabilities of the Information Management MLO. The third MLO, Collaborative Leadership was achieved by collaborating with CRP, DBA, COE, and other staff members in the development and implementation of the Career Locker at the Evening Center. I demonstrated Leadership by involving different agencies into the Career Locker project. Initiating the Career Locker project at the Evening Center demonstrates my ability in setting new goals and direction to obtain successful results. I was able to involve the youth and motivate them when following their goals. In the implementation of the Career Locker I demonstrated my statistical research, information management, and collaborative leadership qualities.

The Career Locker reflected the CSUMB's vision by helping me deliver "service through high quality education" (CSUMB, 2011). The Career Locker allowed me to apply everything I had learned at CSUMB services being delivered. I applied myself as a professional in delivering the Career Locker. The high quality education I obtained at CSUMB provided me with the right knowledge and skills necessary when delivering programs such as the Career Locker. "Enriched living and learning" (CSUMB, 2011) was an option offered for the youth during the participation in the Career Locker. I constantly proposed the idea of attending an educational institution to improve their future and to improve their education. By offering ideas to the youth on how to improve their future I am enriching their lives and their learning.

## Resources

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**Additional Documentation**

**ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Title of Project:** Career Locker

My name is Roberto Garcia

I would like you to take part in a research study to learn more about youth’s motivation in attending college, and school and career interest.

If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be able to develop a cover letter and resume, explore careers, colleges and universities, build a budget for a lifestyle of your choice, and develop and maintain a personal “ePortfolio”.

Participation in this project does not involve any risk or physical and emotional injury at all.

After having completed the assignments and activities you will be able to utilize them for jobs, decide which universities, colleges, and careers you are interested in. You will also be able to maintain your “ePortfolio” for up to two years.

We will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study.

Do you have any questions about this study? You can ask any questions about this study at any time. You can call me or ask me next time. You can reach me to my email BetoGMGF@sbcglobal.net

Signing your name at the bottom of this form means that you agree to be in this study.

**Assent Statement**

Please mark one of the choices below to tell us what you want to do:

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not want to be in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I do want to be in this project.

I understand the procedures described. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know what I will have to do.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signature of Researcher**

I have read this form to the participant and/or the participant has read this form. An explanation of the research was given and questions from the participant were solicited and answered to the participant’s satisfaction. In my judgment, the participant has demonstrated comprehension of the information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Optional:***

**Witness Statement**

I have witnessed the assent process and believe that the participant listed above has been fully informed, understands the project and his/her role, and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **PARENTAL/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Title of Project:** Career Locker

We would like your child to participate in a research study conducted by the Santa Cruz Probation Department-Juvenile Division and Roberto Garcia, a student in California State University, Monterey Bay to be used for a capstone project at California State University, Monterey Bay.

The purpose of this research is to measure youth's motivation and school and career interest after having participated on the Career Locker.

Your child was selected as a participant in this study because he is attending the Evening Center.

The benefits of your child's participation in this project include being able to develop and maintain a personal "ILP/ePortfolio; explore a variety of careers and find out what colleges and universities provide preparation; develop a resume and cover letter for their job search activity; and build a "lifestyle" budget and careers that can provide the necessary income.

If you decide to allow your child to participate in this research, [*he/she*] will be asked to work and participate on the activities and assignments mentioned above.

Participation in this project does not involve any risk or physical and emotional injury at all.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your written or witnessed verbal permission or as required by law. Personal information related to this study will only be shared with the Santa Cruz Probation Department-Juvenile Division.

Allowing your child to take part in this project is entirely up to you. You can choose whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you consent to your child's participation in this study, you may withdraw that consent at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions [*he/she*] does not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

If you want to know more about this research project or have questions or concerns, please call (831)763-8070 and ask to speak to Yolanda Perez-Logan or email me to BetoGMGF@sbcglobal.net

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Thank you for considering participation.

Sincerely,  
Santa Cruz Probation Department-Juvenile Division  
Roberto Garcia  
California State University, Monterey Bay

**Parental Consent Statement**

I have read the contents of this Consent Form. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I freely give my permission for my child to participate in this study. I know that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signature of Researcher**

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



