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Preparing Youth With Job Readiness Skills

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Abstract

Rancho Cielo Youth Campus is a vocational training school where youth ages 16-24 can still acquire their High School Diploma and gain work experience. The main social issue within this organization is system impacted youth. System impacted youth is defined as a “juvenile” which is a youth who has not attained his/her eighteenth birthday and violated the law committing a crime which could have been done by an adult. Contributing factors to this social issue include truancy, peer pressure from fellow classmates, and impulsive behavior. Consequences include incarceration of the youth, a criminal record affecting the youth’s stability, and inability to contribute to society due to their criminal record. To address the social issue a Resume Workshop was created in Rancho Cielo. The idea of the workshop was that students in the construction academy would gain knowledge of what a resume is and then would be guided into creating their own resume adding skills they learned from the vocational training portion of their education at Rancho Cielo. To measure the effectiveness of the workshop a pre and post survey was created. During the pre survey 34.8% agreed to being satisfied with their current resume, 21.7% were comfortable with creating their own resume, 21.7% felt comfortable with addressing their own skills on a resume, and 47.8% disagreed to knowing the purpose of a cover letter. After the post survey was taken 63.2% were satisfied with the resume created during the workshop, 57.9% were comfortable creating their own resume, 36.8% felt comfortable with addressing their own skills on a resume, and 36.8% agreed to knowing the purpose of a cover letter.

Keywords: Rancho, Job Readiness, Youth (16-24), Youth Incarceration

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Agency and communities served

Rancho Cielo Youth Campus is located in Salinas California. The mission statement of Rancho Cielo Youth Campus is to partner with our community to provide a safe campus to deliver programs and services that inspire youth between the ages of 16-24 to learn new skills, gain self-esteem and confidence (Rancho Cielo, 2018). The vision of this program is to transform the lives of youth between the ages of 16-24 and empower them to become accountable, competent, productive, and responsible citizens (Rancho Cielo, 2018). The purpose of Rancho Cielo is to help support students who have been in the juvenile system with a second opportunity to achieve their high school diploma and at the same time gain skills and services. Some services provided to students within the construction academy are: construction training, class at Hartnell College, career and skills assessment, basic computer skills instruction, college readiness, enrollment assistance, academic counseling, behavioral health counseling as needed, assistance with referral to supportive services (transportation, job search clothing, child care, etc.), snacks through the food bank for the classroom, and lunch which is provided by culinary (Rancho Cielo, 2018). In total Rancho Cielo offers four programs to the students. (1) Silver Star Youth Program which is an intensive educational instruction for students ages 15 ½ to 18. Most students in the program are on probation or recommended by juvenile courts and receive either their High School diploma or GED. (2) Transitional Housing which is only offered to Rancho Cielo students or graduates ages 18-24 who are unsafe within the community or homeless. (3) Youth Corp is for students ages 18-24 who want to receive on-the-job

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training towards construction skills, most of the time it is an opportunity given to gang affiliated youth to learn job skills and are referred by probation. (4) Construction/Culinary Academy where students are gaining either construction skills or cooking skills while participating in credit recovery during class time.

The construction academy consists of students engaging in class to gain credit for their High School Diploma. While working on credits students are also receiving workshops that include hands on experience in construction with partnerships including GRID which is a solar panel installation project where students actually install solar panels in Salinas homes, and Granite Construction where students are building tiny homes that will be donated to the homeless. The community served is majority Hispanic. According to Census (2010), Salinas CA has a population of 150,441 residents, out of that population 45.8% are White, 2.0% are Black or African American, 6.3% are Asian, Hispanic or Latino are 71.4%. This leads to the majority of the population being Hispanic. The population served are youth between the ages of 16-24. The Construction Academy holds about 30 students of which 90% of the students served are Hispanic due to the majority of Salinas population being Hispanic. The academy serves both genders, the current class has approximately 16 males and 14 females.

Problem Description

An important social issue in Monterey County is high incarceration rates of youth between the ages of 16 and 24. According to (Kidsdata 2010), California had a Juvenile felony arrest rate of 12.3, while Monterey County had a Juvenile felony arrest rate of 13.1. Comparing the county with the state there has been more juvenile felony rates within the

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county. A “Juvenile” is a person who has not attained their eighteenth birthday (Justice, 2018). Juvenile delinquency is the violation of a law of the United States committed by a person prior to his eighteenth birthday which would have been committed by an adult (Justice, 2018). According to statistics from (Ranchocieloyc.org, 2018), one year of incarceration costs \$148,767 and one year after youth offenders are released only 40% stay out of trouble. As compared to one year at Rancho Cielo which costs \$15,000 and one year after students attend 80% stay out of trouble and 85% are still employed. This particular social problem impacts the agency because the majority of the students who are referred to the programs are Juveniles who have been referred by their probation officer or the Juvenile Court. Which makes Monterey County Probation one of the most important partnerships within Rancho Cielo. Most of the students served are students who have committed a crime from an infraction like skipping school or vandalism to a severe crime like burglary or battery.

Contributing Factors

Contributing factors of this particular social problem include poor school attendance, peer pressure, and impulsivity. (1)Truancy, this is when a student is absent from school with an invalid reason. Truancy includes “ditching” class and staying home because of feeling ill but not acquiring a doctors note. A student is required by law to attend school regularly unless 18 and older. Avoiding school can lead to deviant behavior that can lead to criminal behavior like drug use, alcohol use, or burglary. According to Raby, “Statistics show that among juveniles who are in custody, truancy is a common offense. Truancy is also a common warning sign for young (aged 7-12) offenders, in

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addition to serious and violent juvenile offenders (n.d.).” (2) Students tend to feel pressure to do certain things by their fellow classmates in order to fit in with them or to be considered cool. Most of the time these bad influences lead to delinquent acts. As stated by Baysinger (2019), “If all of their friends are committing delinquent acts, the child may feel pressured to do the same to be accepted.” (3) Impulsive behavior, this is having the inability to regulate self-control. As stated by Carroll, Hemingway, Bower, Ashman, Houghton, & Durkin, “ There is extensive evidence that impulsivity, or the inability to regulate self-control, is an important determinant of delinquent behavior.” Impulsivity includes the cognitive, behavioural, and personality variables. A young adult who reacts without thinking and responds quickly to something is because of their impulsive behavior which can lead to juvenile delinquency. Being impulsive has to do with risk taking behavior that is more likely to occur for juvenile offenders. Carroll, Hemingway, Bower, Ashman, Houghton, & Durkin state, “The relationship between risk-taking behaviours and delinquency has been clearly documented, with young offenders tending to take significantly more risks than non-offenders (2006)”

Consequences

Consequences of this particular problem include incarceration/recidivism, criminal records affecting the youth’s stability, and inability to contribute to society. (1) Incarceration, the juvenile convicted may lose their freedom by being incarcerated or placed on probation which can later lead to recidivism due to being incarcerated with other delinquents who influence them into more wrongful behavior. If recidivism continues it may lead the juvenile to be tried as an adult which leads to having a permanent record. As

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stated by Barker (2018), “Puts him or her in relationships with other delinquents, who may be more sophisticated or influential.” (2) Criminal records affect the youth’s stability, if a juvenile commits a felony record is open to the public and the juvenile loses a chance of getting it expunged which can cause them to be rejected in most places like jobs or schools. As stated by McConnell (2012), “If the child is at least 14 when charged with a violent felony, the records will be open to the public.” (3) Ability to contribute to society, since the juvenile court is required to report to the child’s school district of any offense committed by the student this can lead to the student being suspended or expelled. This can harm the student’s chances of receiving an education due to the student records. Which can also affect the child’s chances of contributing to society with a good paying job due to not achieving their high school diploma. McConnell (2012) states, “If a child is adjudicated delinquent of one of the offenses, the school superintendent may suspend or expel him or her.”

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Factor 1 Truancy	An important social issue in Monterey County is high incarceration rates of youth between the ages of 16 and 24.	Consequence 1 Incarceration/Recidivism
Factor 2 Peer Pressure		Consequence 2 Criminal records affect the youth’s stability
Factor 3 Impulsive Behavior		Consequence 3 Inability to contribute to society

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Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

Job Readiness Workshops will help to address the consequences side of the social problem. Since the social problem is high incarceration rates for youth between the ages of 16-24, a consequence is that students lose the ability to contribute to society. Having a job readiness workshop would help support students with getting a job. Students will be able to address vocational training skills on their resume in order to obtain a job after graduating. Providing this support and preparation is great for the students because it would focus on guiding students through the creation of their own resume. Since students have trouble addressing their own skills this workshop would allow them to receive individual help with addressing their own soft skills on the resume. Youth will be more likely to contribute to society by acquiring a job, but also staying away from trouble that would lead to recidivism. The way this would work is by providing the students with five workshop of an hour long, since it is a new group of students each semester, these workshops would provide information based on job readiness. The first workshop consisted of 23 students learning the aspects of building a resume and cover letter through power point information. Then they were given material and walked through the material which included: a word bank for addressing skills, an example of a resume, example of a cover letter, job search websites, a guide to writing their own cover letter, and a guide to creating their own resume. The rest of the workshop consisted of guiding the students step by step through an outline from google docs. During this guide as a group each student was able to address their personal contact information, experiences, education, volunteer work, vocational

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training, awards, projects, soft skills, and hard skills. Some students would receive individual help addressing their own soft skills as well as what job experiences were relevant to add on the resume. The goal of this project is to help students create their own resume to keep in their google docs. So, that it can be accessible to students when needed for job applications. The general purpose of this project is to prepare students with resume building skills so that they can continue to make changes to their resume and be able to understand and implement their own skills on their resume. This project will help students identify and address their own skills, so they can be able to provide an accurate resume when submitting job applications. Having students participate in a job readiness workshop may empower them to complete their high school diploma and will provide opportunities for students to be more independent and responsible young adults. Many of the students who arrive at Rancho Cielo are students who do not have a place to stay or struggle financially and are looking for a part-time job that will be flexible in hours so that they can continue to achieve their high school diploma and be able to support themselves while in school.

Project Implementation

The capstone project focuses on job readiness for students within the construction academy in Rancho Cielo Youth Campus. The general sequence of steps to implement this project are to first discuss the capstone project with the program coordinator/ case manager for the construction academy. The student intern will begin by developing a survey to assess the needs of the students. After acquiring the needs of students, the intern identified that 26.1% voted Resume Building, 30.4% voted cover letter material, 39.1% voted job

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search websites, 30.4% voted addressing skills on resume, and 43.5% voted interviewing skills. After speaking with the mentor and instructor regarding the results, it was identified that resume, cover letter, and addressing skills on resume needed to be the material covered in the workshops. The completion of developing material for the priority topics would lead to delivering a workshop five days one hour long throughout the semester regarding the priority topic. The students will then participate in the workshop and receive material regarding the specified need. After completing the workshop the students will then be given a second survey. This survey will give results showing whether or not the material provided for the workshop was effective by enhancing their learning skills based on job readiness and completion of a resume.

Finally, students will attend the workshops. The completion of the workshop will result in a survey that evaluates the effectiveness of the workshops. Then, the reporting of the project would be completed. Following, there would be a preparation for capstone presentation in a selected format. The Rancho Cielo Youth Campus expect services regarding job readiness workshops that will continue to address the needs of students. A detailed implementation plan and timeline can be seen in the Scope of Work in Appendix A.

Project Purpose

The primary purpose of this project is to develop a job readiness workshop. The activities provided for the students attending the construction academy will help reduce recidivism among youth who have been incarcerated. By helping them improve resume building skills, the youth will feel more comfortable providing a resume to potential

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employers, by practicing on addressing their own skills they will feel more confident in being able to make changes to their resume. Being able to gain these skills can reduce recidivism because students are more likely to feel confident with creating their own resume which will help them gain confidence in achieving a job that fits their skills and that is flexible in hours with their education instead of the street life, this would allow them to contribute to society in a positive way.

Project Justification

As Laura Barrette, K12 Director of School Counseling Program states, High school students won't need a resume for service-oriented jobs, unless they are looking for an internship or a professional job, a resume would help them stand out against other candidates, a resume shows responsibility, highlights ambition through volunteer and honor roll, helps with recommendation letters from staff in the school district. Since, Rancho Cielo Youth Campus is also a Vocational Learning school. In a day the classroom is split in half one half is doing academic learning in class, while the other half is in the vocational aspect of the class which is in construction building a tiny home. The importance of students building a resume is that students are gaining skills and experience through the construction portion of the class. Creating a resume would help them address the experience and skills they acquire in order to obtain a job or an internship.

Expected Outcomes

This project would have met at least all construction academy student's need for the workshops. By the end of the workshop at least 100% of the students will claim to have learned new material and be able to have built and completed a resume. At least 50% of the

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students will feel satisfied with the resume they created during the workshop. At least 50 % of the students will feel comfortable addressing their own skills on their resume. At least 50% of the students would gain knowledge of cover letter. At least twenty Rancho Cielo Construction Academy students would have attended the workshop and completed the Pre and Post survey given for the workshop.

Assessment Plan

The plan to measure effectiveness of the project components is by first creating a pre survey for the students which will measure the students knowledge regarding resume building, cover letter creation, being able to address skills on resume, and knowledge of job search websites. The last question in the pre-survey will identify their needs for the job readiness workshop by giving options of what students would like more information on. Also, having a completion sheet for students who complete their resume which will be posted in the classroom, this sheet will be used to help identify who needs help completing their resume. A post survey at the end of the workshops will be given to the students. This survey will measure the effectiveness of the material provided for students during the workshop, it will be compared to the survey given before the workshop.

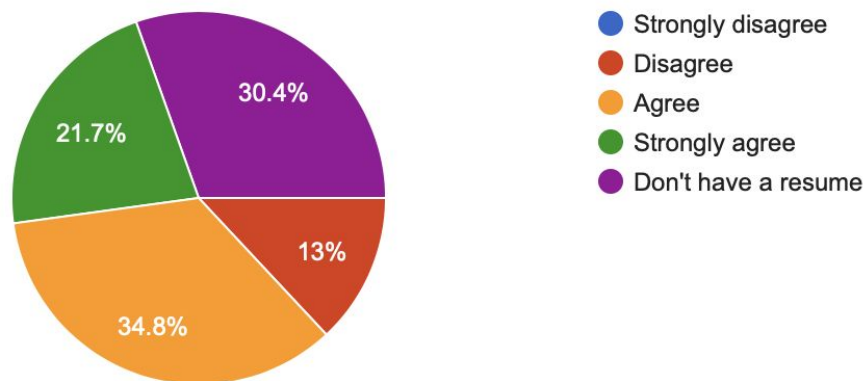
Project Results

In the workshop created for the construction academy students we had 23 participants in the pre-survey and 19 participants in the post-survey, the number of students varies because some students are dropped from the program. Students are dropped due to them not following the student contract that is signed by them when they first register for the program. When the pre-survey and post- survey were taken results indicated that the

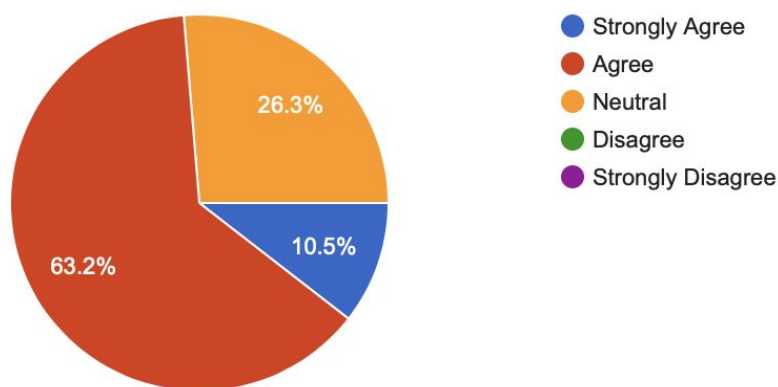
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majority of the class is composed of boys there are 3 girls and the remaining are boys. The survey results also showed that the age range in the group that participated in this workshop ranges from 16-20, with the majority age group being 17 years of age.

Pre-Survey N=23 student



Post-Survey N=19 students

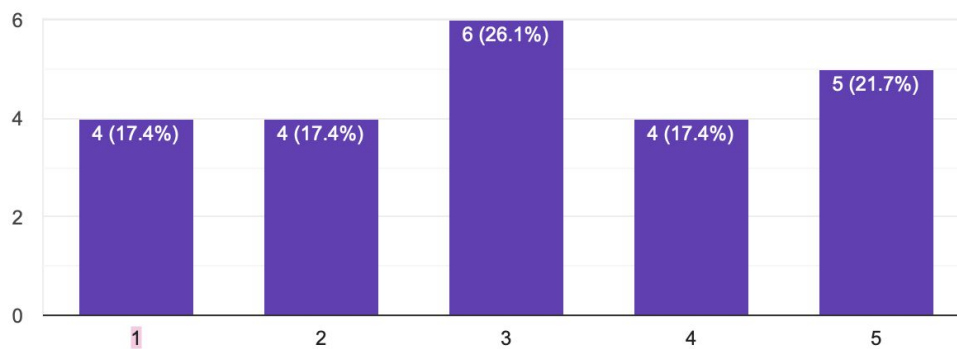


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Figure 1. For the Pre-Survey the following question was asked I feel satisfied with my current resume? Do you agree with this statement? From the 23 participants who responded to the survey 30.4% in purple of the students had claimed to not have a resume of their own, 13% in red disagreed with the statement, 34.8% in yellow agreed with the statement, and 21.7% in green strongly agreed with the statement. The following results taken from the survey indicated that 34.8% who agreed had a resume already established of which they were satisfied with. This is either because they had created one because they have had previous Jobs before or because they had asked my mentor for support in creating a resume when they were in need of a job. The 30.4% which claimed to not have a resume were either because they were too young to acquire a job that they did not even care about obtaining a resume, or had no knowledge of what a resume is and its importance. For the Post-Survey I was able to create a resume of which I am satisfied with during the workshop. Do you agree with this statement? From the 19 students who participated in the survey 10.5% in blue strongly agreed, 63.2% in red agree, and 26.3% in yellow were neutral. The following results indicate that 73.7% of the students found the workshop useful and were able to create a resume of which they feel confident with. The 26.3% who claimed neutral were either the students who had a resume already and were satisfied with the resume they had created or they did not care much about having a resume because they are more focused on achieving their High School Diploma rather than finding a job because of their age.

Pre-Survey N=23

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Post-Survey N=19

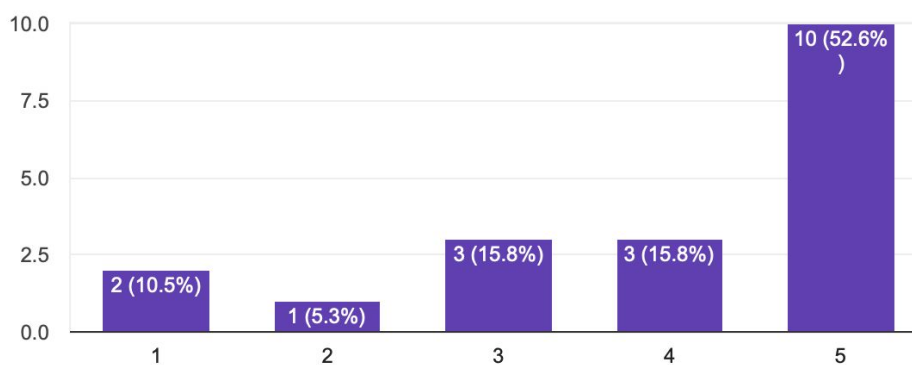
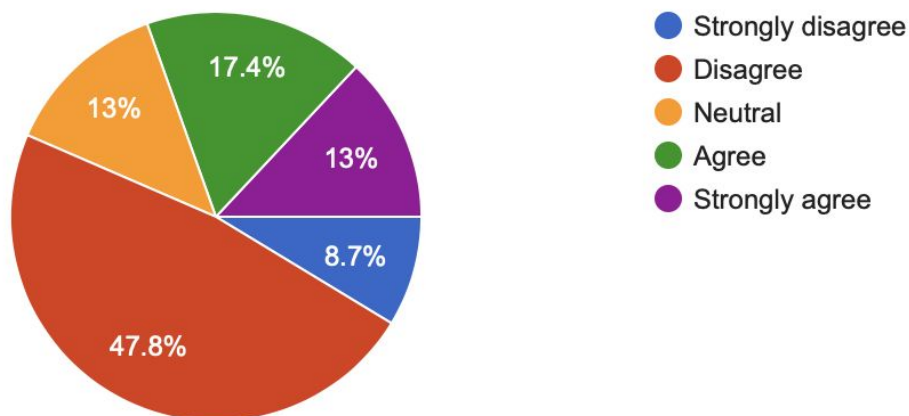


Figure 2. The following question was asked, On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you with creating your own resume? The following bar graph for pre-survey 1 being less confident and 5 being most confident from the 23 students who answered the survey 8 students scaled between a 1-2 meaning they were less confident, 6 students scaled a 3 meaning they were neutral, and 9 students scaled between a 4-5 meaning they were most confident. The following results indicate that not all of the students felt confident enough to build their own resume on their own. On the post-survey the same question was asked.

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Results were that out of 19 students on a scale of 1-5 1 being less confident and 5 being most confident 3 students scaled between 1-2 meaning they were less confident, 3 scaled 3 meaning they felt neutral, and 13 scaled between a 4-5 meaning they were most confident. These results indicated that the workshop was a success for most students because now more than half of the students felt more confident with creating their own resume after receiving information and being guided through creating a resume. During the workshop there were some students who had to be individually helped with walking through the resume because they were not sure if adding previous job experience of a week or a month was necessary, or they did not know the skills they can offer. The results also indicated that for 3 students this workshop was not a success and this can be because they do not feel confident enough to be able to identify what relevant information should go on a resume or because they have trouble addressing their own skills.

Pre Survey N=23



Post-Survey N=19

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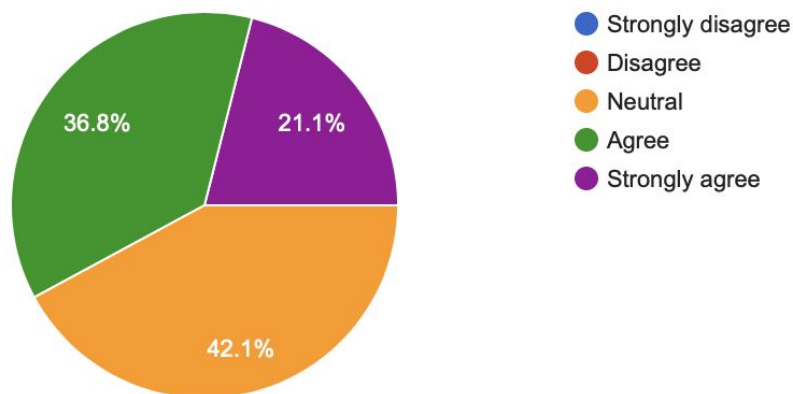
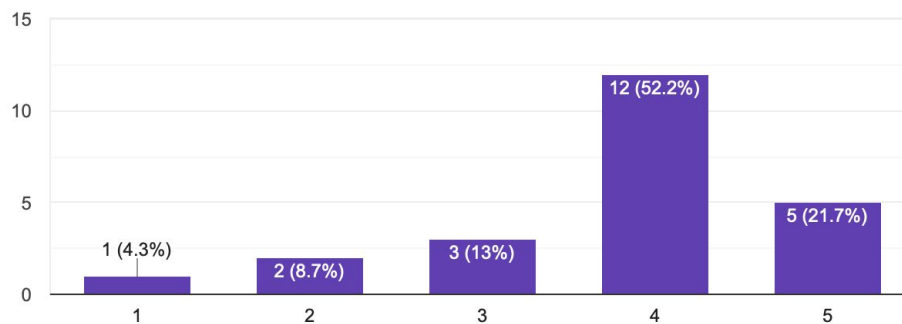


Figure 3. The following question was asked I know what a cover letter is? Do you agree with this statement? The following pie chart for pre-survey shows 47.8% in red of the 23 students who responded to the survey claimed to disagree with this statement. In blue 8.7% strongly disagreed, 13% in yellow are neutral to the statement, 17.4% in green agree, and 13% in purple strongly agree. This indicated that close to half of the students claimed to disagree with the statement. During the powerpoint workshop many of the students were asking what a cover letter is and why it is needed. This also indicated that students had no knowledge of what a cover letter is either because they never had to submit a cover letter or because they never received information on what a cover letter is and why it is important. In the post survey the same question was asked and had results of 21.1% in green of students who strongly agreed, 36.8% in green of students who agreed and 42.1% of students in yellow who were neutral. The results indicate that those 42.1% of students who claimed neutral was because they already had knowledge of what a cover letter was so the workshop was more of a refresher into reminding them what it is and its importance. The 57.9% who claimed strongly agree or agree indicated that the information provided in

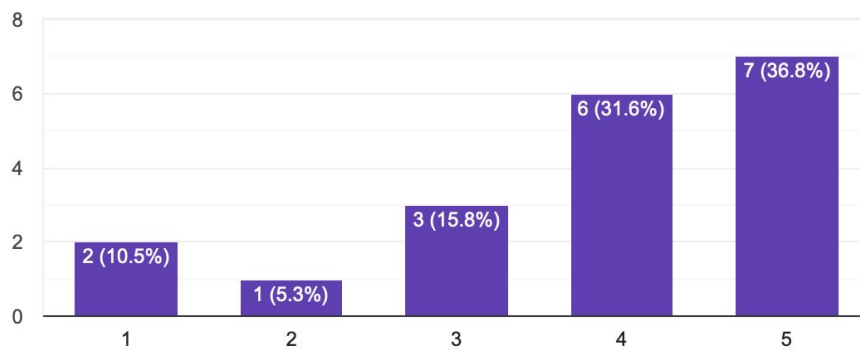
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regards to cover letter was successful to more than half of the students. Allowing them to gain useful information as to what is a cover letter, why it is important to have one, what information goes on a cover letter, and examples of how to create one.

Pre-Survey N=23



Post-Survey N=19



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Figure 4. The following question was asked, On a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel addressing your own skills on your resume? The bar graph for pre-survey was scaled from 1-5, 1 being the less confident and 5 being the most confident. 3 students scaled between 1-2 meaning they felt less confident, 3 students scaled a 3 meaning they were neutral, and 17 students scaled between a 4-5 meaning they were more confident. In the post-survey the same question was asked and also scaled from 1-5, 1 being less confident and 5 being most confident. 3 students scaled between 1-2 meaning less confident, 3 students scaled 3 meaning neutral, and 13 students scaled between 4-5 meaning they felt more confident. The results for both were the same more than half of the students felt comfortable enough with addressing their skills and identifying them on their own and 3 students felt less confident. This can indicate that the information may not have helped them as much in regards to addressing skills on their resume.

The expected outcomes were that by the end of the workshop at least 100% of the students will claim to have learned new material and be able to have built and completed a resume. At least 50% of the students will feel satisfied with the resume they created during the workshop. At least 50% of the students will feel comfortable addressing their own skills on their resume. At least 50% of the students would gain knowledge of cover letter. At least twenty Rancho Cielo Construction Academy students would have attended the workshop and completed the Pre and Post survey given for the workshop. With the results provided 73.7% students completed a resume of which they were satisfied with and 26.3% were neutral. This proves that 100% of the students were able to build and complete a resume, and that more than 50% were satisfied with the resume created. The results for

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addressing their own skills remained the same although 50% of the students in the class can address their own skills on a resume. The results show that 47.9% agreed knowledge of cover letter even though it was not 50% we were close to the expected outcome. The pre-survey had 23 students which met the expected outcome and the post-survey had 19 students which was close to meeting the expected outcome of 20.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The workshops were a success, students were able to develop job readiness skills. These workshops helped students within the construction academy improve resume building skills, the youth felt more comfortable with providing a resume to potential employers. Students received help and practiced addressing their own skills both soft skills and hard skills, they felt more confident in being able to make changes to their resume. Students also received information in regards to what is a cover letter and why it is important to have one. Recommendations would be to emphasize more on addressing students skills. During the workshop it was explained what skills are and the difference between soft and hard skills. As well as students being provided with a word bank that had words of which can be used to help address their own skills. Students were also helped as a group and individually when it came to addressing their own skills. This still did not help the students because results remained the same. It is recommended that creating an activity where students can practice addressing skills can help improve students' ability to address their own skills on a resume. Another recommendation would be to create a second portion for the students were after creating their resume they have mock interviews. Staff within Rancho Cielo can come into the class and interview students by asking potential questions

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that can be asked at a real interview and then be scored on how they would do. The score can reflect how they address questions, how they are dressed, and how their resume is built. As well as providing feedback to the students on how they can improve their resumes and their interviewing skills.

Personal Reflection

Being an intern at Rancho Cielo Youth Campus has assured me that the population I desire to work with is Youth. The opportunity I was given to work with the construction academy allowed me to grow as a professional and work on my communication skills. Although one of my main challenges was being shy and not fully being able to open up to a conversation, students within this program gave me the confidence I needed to be able to approach them and have a simple conversation. The most important aspect I learned within this program is that, it is important to be open to these students. The students who come to this program are mainly troubled youth those kids in class who used to throw paper or pencils around, those kids who would talk back to the instructors because they felt the need for attention, those kids who would draw on the board something silly when the instructor wasn't their, the loud kid, the kid always in the office, or the kid always skipping class. We all know one of these kids because when we were in school we were either that kid or would find that kid funny sometimes even annoying. Well Rancho Cielo has the majority of these kids attending this school because they are seeking a second opportunity in life. An opportunity to prove to themselves or prove to someone that doubts them that they can graduate from high school and be a better perspective of themselves. Many of the students who attend this program just need guidance, support, assurance, and an active listener.

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Guidance into how to achieve their high school diploma. Support because some either do not receive the support at home due to being in a broken home or because they need someone who is always motivating them to do better. Assurance of what there goal is, why they are there, of themselves, or simple assurance that they can do it and you are there to support them. Lastly, active listener these students come with a lot of stories and sometimes all they want is someone to not judge them to only listen to what they have to say. As one of the students told me on my last day of attending Rancho Cielo, “ I hope that the next intern is like you and is able to talk to us and help us like you did because we need someone who understands us.” If you ever get the opportunity to work within Rancho Cielo or simple visit the campus just be open minded and first listen, be the change they need by supporting them and taking the time to listen to their story.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
1. Discuss capstone project	Capstone projected approved	January 2019 and August 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
2. Develop a survey to acquire needs of students	Survey approved	September 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
3. Identify the students priority topics	Priority topic confirmed and approved	September 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
4. Develop the material that addresses the priority topics (IEP Resume)	Material approved	September 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
5. Deliver once a month session for resume building	sign in sheet for students who attend workshops	September-December 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
6. Complete reporting	Agency & capstone reports	November 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
7. Capstone festival preparation	Presentation at capstone festival	November 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
8. Capstone Project	Capstone festival	December 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece
9. Prepare capstone presentation in selected format	Instructor approval	December 2019	Crystal, Irene, Cece