



# INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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## PLANTING THE SEEDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### Books for Kids

TC jr. and his friends, Lizzy and Speckles, introduce young students to higher education through a series of activity books developed for Pre-K through third-grade. Available in English and Spanish, the books were written, designed, and illustrated by a Temple College staff member; translations were completed by college staff and volunteers from the community; and the books were field-tested prior to printing and distribution.

Reading comprehension is incorporated into the activity books while students fill in the blanks, solve crossword puzzles, and complete word searches after reading the text. Activities such as mazes, drawing, and coloring further engage the students in messages about higher education. TC jr. has his own e-mail address, and students receive an automatic reply after e-mailing him.

Public and private schools in Temple and several surrounding communities participate in the program. During the first two years of the program, only one book was available for all age groups (written both in English and Spanish). Currently, three different books are available; each is age- and interest-level appropriate. Temple College pencils and Temple College paw stickers are distributed along with the booklets.

There are no costs incurred by the receiving schools or students for this program. To assist with the costs of production and distribution, Temple College has recruited various sponsors whose company logos are printed inside the books' front covers. Sponsors receive copies of their books as they are distributed to the various elementary schools.

### Mini-College Days—"I'm Going to College"

Designed for fourth and fifth graders, this program is a mini-college day aimed at keeping children in school by giving them a vision of higher education. "I'm Going to College" was established in 1997, as a partnership between Temple College and one local elementary

school. This program was one of the seven components of the elementary school's dropout prevention program and a major player in its being selected for the 1998-1999 Innovative Public School Award.

Currently, we offer one to two programs, approximately 3 to 4 hours in length, each academic year; 90-110 students participate in each program. Arriving on campus, groups of students are organized to rotate through concurrent departmental presentations. Faculty and staff conduct the presentations while student volunteers and staff members accompany the students throughout the day and ensure that the program activities remain on schedule. At least one Independent School District representative is required to accompany each group of students throughout the program, and any disciplinary issues that arise must be addressed by the representative(s).

Disciplines explored during the presentations include biology, chemistry, music, physics, health, and technical careers. Many of the sessions are interactive, and the students are encouraged to ask and answer questions. All students are assembled as a group for the mid-morning break, where they enjoy snacks provided by the college, foundation, and/or community sponsors. After the departmental presentations, students may eat the lunches that they have brought with them at one or more selected sites on campus prior to returning to their schools.

During the mid-morning break or lunch, representatives from student organizations may provide entertainment or share information about their organizations and college experiences. Temple College provides each child with an information packet to take away with the departmental items they collect. One of the most popular items has been the personalized Future College Student ID card. There is no cost to the school districts or students for these programs.

### An Important Partnership—"Interacting With Your Future"

"Interacting With Your Future" is a partnership between Temple College and the Independent School



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Districts of Temple and nearby Belton to explore educational opportunities beyond high school, identify viable careers and career paths, and expose students to resources that can assist them in making wise decisions regarding future goals.

While at the college, students attend academic and financial aid workshops, as well as several departmental presentations. Presentations focus primarily on health and technical careers, and students are introduced to educational requirements, career possibilities, salary expectations, and descriptions of typical workdays.

Each program day accommodates 200-250 students. Students are assembled as a group for the academic and financial aid workshops, prior to attending the departmental presentations, where they are organized into groups of approximately 50 each for rotation through the concurrent presentations. Faculty and staff members conduct the workshops and departmental presentations. Students and staff accompany the students throughout the day and ensure that the program activities remain on schedule. At least one Independent School District representative is required to accompany each group throughout the program, and any disciplinary issues must be addressed by the representative(s). There is no cost to the schools or students for this program.

## Conclusions

Implementing these early intervention strategies, Temple College plants the seeds of higher education before students enter their middle-school years and as they are considering their post-high school plans. Books and programs continue to receive high marks.

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