

New Haven Adult School Windows into Culture



Project Purpose:

This activity was designed to allow students to showcase their cultures to fellow students and the community-at-large. The goal was to increase awareness about the different cultures of New Haven's students, and to allow the students to feel a sense of pride in their own cultures and bolster their self-confidence. In the process of learning more about different cultures, New Haven also hoped to strengthen skills such as public speaking, working in groups and conducting research.

Summary Description of Project:

The New Haven Adult School student body is typically diverse for WIA Title II adult schools throughout California. The Windows into Culture activity enables students to learn from each other by showcasing their cultures through songs, dances, skits, monologues, food, and a fashion show of traditional costumes. Windows into Culture is a comprehensive program in which EL Civics students complete activities to learn more about their own cultures and the

cultures of fellow students. The Windows into Culture show is the culminating activity of this EL Civics curriculum, and the entire school is involved in the preparation and execution of the event.

Students prepare for the event over the course of the semester, and work in groups according to the countries from which they came from. They conduct research to learn facts and information about their culture, and prepare to present their project in front of other students, relatives, friends and community members. With the help of instructors, students are in charge of planning and executing the cultural presentations, doing things from making costumes to choreographing dances.

During the cultural presentation, each student participates in presenting his or her group project. They perform cultural dances, songs, skits and other activities. These presentations are a highlight of the semester for many of New Haven's students, and are also attended by outside community members. Students gain valuable knowledge and skills while preparing for the presentations, and learn about the cultures of other EL Civics students.

Project Evaluation and Results:

The success of the Windows to Culture project is evident in the overall satisfaction of the students, and the desire among students and community members to continue the program. The overall interest in the Windows into Culture show indicates that the curriculum is engaging not only students but the New Haven community. New Haven Adult School's student performance for all ESL levels is at or above California's state-wide averages, and the agency consistently shows high levels of achievement every quarter.

For more information, please contact:

Laura Zaro
New Haven Adult School
510-489-2185, ext 203
lzaro@nhusd.k12.ca.us