Library Services for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Population

• IDD definition
  – IQ below 75
  – Associated with difficulties in communication, self care and socialization
Professional Dilemma

• Diversity and inclusion demand support for those with ID
• Practical limits of resources and training for staff
• How to help those with impediments to learning to read?
Critical Need

- Population largely abandoned after high school
- Limited socialization opportunities
- Disconnect from community
- Lack of employment opportunities
Historical Efforts

• Previous efforts generally unsuccessful
  – targeted outreach to draw population into the library
  – creating specialized collections to appeal to interests
  – mainstreaming – complete overhaul to include full accessibility and training of all staff
Grass Roots Initiatives

- Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) – informal book clubs that provide public spaces and focus on ‘reading to learn’
- Provides socialization opportunities for individuals 16 and older
Post-Secondary Education Programs (PSE)

- Programs for enrolling those with ID into colleges

- Rationale:
  1. Socialization skills
  2. Practical training for independent living

- Data compiled by ThinkCollege! (www.thinkcollege.net)

- 160 programs identified at 4 year colleges in America – NO library involvement!
PSE Distribution Nationwide

- Geographic distribution at odds with population distribution and political expectations
- No involvement by academic libraries
Educational Theories

• Context-based, interactive learning

• Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
Case Study

- Academy for Community Inclusion, (ACI) at Florida Atlantic University, Jupiter
- PSE Program
History of Book Club

• Spring of 2016
• 8 students in first cohort
• Run by a librarian and 2 staff members
Book Club Today!

- 32 + students total
- Chapter of NCBC
- At one time held two sessions/week and expanded into summer
Program Layout

- Socialization – Pioneering work in educational games unique in NCBC
Socializing

- Pictionary and Charades – UDL
- Interactivity and multiple learning styles
- One Word and quiz games speaks to enjoyment of attention
- Failures of Bingo and crafts – isolation
Attendance Results

- Attendance – 60-80%
- Renewal ~ 30%
- Over 2.5 years, total n=32
- Number is growing – up to 12 students as of Wednesday
Persistence

- Continued attendance is bi-modal
- 40% attend half or more sessions
- 60% never return with the remainder in-between
Observations – Levels of Engagement

• Engaged participation (3 pts)
• Socializing (2 pts)
• Attendance (1 pt.)
• Isolation (0 pts)
Coding

- Code 10 recurrent behaviors to gauge interest
- Varying degrees of involvement/interest
- Fluid environment
- Participation surpassed other categories for all readings and activities
Supplemental Assessment

- Field notes
- Parent/student Surveys
- 30 NCBC affiliate interviews
NCBC vs. FAU Book Club Results

• Similar results with reading selections

• Social activities preferred to games
Reading Selection

- Wide range of genres
- Preference for children and YA books
- Concrete, externalized action, and conflict-based plots
Overall Benefits

For Library:
• Increase in traffic
• Increase in check-outs
• Greater visibility
• Library seen as an inviting place

For Students:
• Made friends with staff and other students
• Used library as study space
• Learned about library resources
• Peer mentoring opportunities
Moving Forward…

• Assess available resources
• Provide opportunities for work
• Collaborate with organizations

• Offer specialized library instruction and consultation
• Work directly with individuals to improve reading and socialization skills
Questions?

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