

Summer Fellowship Summary Report



Grant: [The Tamer Center for Social Enterprise, SESF Award, CU Business School, \(2023\).](#)

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Organization: [The New Community Project Inc.](#)

1. What project did you work on and how does it fit with the organization's mission?

During my summer at The New Community Project Inc. as a Tamer Center for Social Enterprise Fellow, I primarily worked on developing a curriculum design and research study exploring educational programs that address the needs and aspirations of minority learners in underserved communities. I have spent this last summer as an instructor at Fordham University, teaching rising high school juniors as part of a non-profit organization called, The New Community Project. I focused on the technical aspects of “essay writing” as well as the effective tools one can use to structure their argument based on the qualitative and quantitative data that we collectively gathered and analyzed. My research and course, “Literary Lab” was directly connected to the organization’s mission as I worked with the director of NewComm as well as fellow educators while leveraging a scientific study of a novel for a 4-week paid academic internship program for rising high school juniors and seniors. My research project and curriculum design outcomes helped to expand the scope of the organization’s social advocacy efforts, specifically in the Bronx, New York. For instance, my interdisciplinary Media Studies course introduced high school students to relevant scholars in Africana Studies like S.J Toliver, and the skills needed to connect her research findings to hip-hop artists like J. Cole. After 4 weeks of intensive training, students led a public-facing forum at Fordham University’s Rose Hill Campus and guided a discussion about Education Reform, Policy Reform and other general advocacy related initiatives.

2. How did you apply the skill-sets that you've learned from your current degree/major?

In conducting preliminary dissertation research on interdisciplinary methods in comparative literature and Africana studies, I have honed my skills translating multimedia sources into accessible language for a broad audience. For example, as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant, I strengthened my skills when innovating cross-cultural education and programming. I have worked with the U.S Embassy to develop their long-term strategic vision in the context of advancing experimental approaches to educational needs.

My current degree as a PhD candidate in the English Comparative Literature Department, Theatre & Performance Studies Program has allowed me to critically examine services needed to develop international global educational strategies. As an Instructor and Researcher as part of NewComm, I encouraged my students to practice their speaking/presentation skills and to explore a variety of cultural topics challenging them to think critically about cultural exchange, public knowledge and social capital. Gradually, I realized that I thrive in spaces where I can use my cutting-edge academic work to help shape the process and future of a budding initiative that investigates tactics for community-building by performing field research, field work, and various writing projects.

3. What are some challenges you faced?

When conducting a research project and curriculum design tailored to 16 and 17 year olds, it was challenging at times to readjust my instructional scaffolding techniques. Each student in this program is from a different Public and Private school from across NYC. Their schools ranged from the Horace Mann School (Private & Independent) to Lion Charter School (Public School). Intriguingly and expectedly, both institutions have their own individual teaching styles and requirements. Therefore, the students who came from these schools each entered with a varying level of skill-set in reading comprehension, writing, retention, etc.. Moreover, due to the time constraint of the program, as the students were learning and developing a new skill rooted in their own prior knowledge, it was at times difficult to create a curriculum guide that was suitable for every student in the classroom. I had to problem solve and identify solutions in creative ways in order to address new emerging questions about Education Reform and equitable learning practices. Fortunately, my team and director were incredible support systems and mentors as I continued to sharpen my craft for teaching and learning.

4. What are your takeaways from the experience? Feel free to describe your goals, what you have learned throughout your experience, etc.

It was such an incredibly invaluable experience to work at the intersection of education reform, theory and application to build more equitable and sustainable futures with the New Community Project. Throughout my experience, I explored new ways of analyzing literature that focused on the role of social capital, financial capital and strategic planning. With support from the Tamer Center for Social Enterprise and research directorship from the organization, I was able to fulfill my overall summer research and teaching goals while producing tangible syllabi that showcase the newly developed intersections between quantitative and qualitative research. I pursued a position at NewComm because I wanted to explore the process of developing “excellent working environments” for diverse learners with a specific focus on minoritized learners in underserved communities. Throughout the experience, I realized that my teaching and research allowed students to foster strong literacy skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving strategies. And though this program is still at an iterative design stage, I will be continuing my research efforts as a consultant to further develop the NewComm Project as an education design studio. I feel confident that this is the ideal place for me to launch my continued efforts in developing research for building dynamic learning environments that help institutions build deeper relationships with their local and global communities.