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Who Learned More: Them or Us

This presentation will highlight the outcomes of an after-school program involving pre-service teachers and a local urban elementary school. The original title of the study was “The Effectiveness of Integrating non-Fiction Text with Hands-on Science in Elementary Grades 1 – 5.” The goal was to increase standardized test scores for reading comprehension and general science knowledge. A science/literacy curriculum was selected by the principal of the school for the college students to use. It contained specific reading strategies, science activities and extension suggestions. Preliminary data shows very favorable results (as measured by standardized assessments) but a more complete statistical analysis is forthcoming.

Although the initial objectives of the program were focused on advances related to the elementary students, the unexpected results were the skills and knowledge gained by the pre-service teachers. Records of their thoughts and reflections were captured via journaling and responses to written prompts by the researcher. It was anticipated that this was going to be a worthwhile experience, but the breadth and depth of their learning was not anticipated. Based on their journals, this could be for some, a defining moment in their pre-service career.