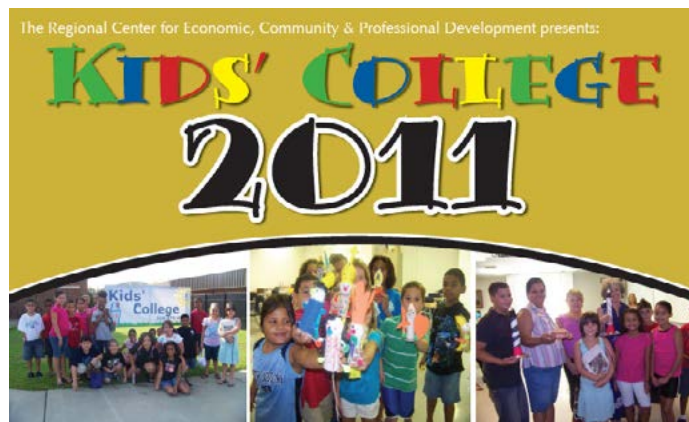MELANIE WOOD / UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PEMBROKE

Summer Kids College at University of North Carolina Pembroke

Kids' College is a summer program offered by The University of North Carolina at Pembroke through The Regional Center for Economic, Community and Professional Development. The goal is to develop and expand students' interests, stimulate creativity, and provide unique learning opportunities on a college campus.

The University of North Carolina Pembroke hosts a Regional Center for Economic Development which reaches out to the community offering two sections of summer camp called Kids College and Teen College. We at the Library have sought the opportunity to contribute to the Information Literacy skills of these students, first through eleventh grades, by providing activity periods full of library action!

The activities for these camps last an hour and a half, so we get one or two sections of these groups per day. We outline a program for these young students in the spring, then hold on to our hats as summer comes, because we never know exactly when or how many students will drop in to participate. It is never more than twenty, but the age range is rather large.

The planning team for Kids College consists of four library staff members, who are composed of one former children's librarian, one former teen librarian, one former teacher and another who is young at heart. We put our expertise and emotional intelligence about children to work planning fun programming that is developmentally-appropriate for a large age-range group, intellectually stimulating and hopefully exciting! The challenges are great, because there are so many varying factors: we are not sure who exactly is participating, what their interests are, when they are coming to the library, and where would be the best place for this. Luckily the kids involved are very open-minded, do not yet have any prejudice against the library and in fact are very agreeable about the entire experience. I always dread a mass uprising of middle-school children who basically refuse to do "library activities," but in two years of doing this, that hasn't happened! In fact they

really enjoy themselves, give great feedback and provide suggestions for their eventual return.

The program lasts for two weeks; during the first week of Kids College we had the theme of *Dinosaurs Ate the Library!* For this we prepared four different days of activities, mostly structured like this: Read a picture book, quiz the students on their knowledge and interest in dinosaurs (and the library,) then split them into pairs and show them how to find books in the catalog. This is when the students get the most excited- when they are out on the prowl for their DINOSAUR EGGS! After being assigned a title of a book in our juvenile collection, students walk very quickly—(no running please!) to find out which dinosaur they will be researching. An egg, with the name of a type of dinosaur, is hidden in each of the titles assigned, then World Book

Encyclopedia or a dinosaur reference book was used to answer questions such as "When did your dinosaur live?" and "What did your dinosaur eat?"

After each group collects their answers from the print reference materials, they share the information with the rest of the group. The students were tempted to use the computers to find out the information, but they pretty quickly found that a lot of the stuff on the internet about dinosaurs can be laughably inaccurate. If there was time left over, depending on how quickly the students finished, we had them either draw, color or write a story about a dinosaur; creative inspiration was usually drawn from the earlier dinosaur story.

For the second week we changed the theme to *Castles and Countries*, studying the world and types of governments. Many students found it interesting that some countries still have monarchies. This was a little heavy material for the younger students, but had more broad appeal than the dinosaur theme. Quite nearly the same structure was used for this program being: Read a story about a prince, princess, dragon or even a fairy tale, then instead of search for a dinosaur egg, the students searched for a

castle that gives a country assignment. The kids really enjoyed finding out more about their countries and took great pride in being able to use the encyclopedias well enough to find the information they needed such as "What is the most common religion in this country?" and "Tell us one interesting fact about this country." For an end of session time-filler craft, the students most enjoyed designing crowns and writing stories about what their kingdom would be like.

There was also a component of the Kids College for older students, which was called Teen College. The Teen College students worked with a couple of male colleagues for whom this program has been on their agenda for many years. Their preparation process seems to adapt a resource scavenger hunt that they have on hand for some of the pre-college students. This is a task of preparing students for the type of research skills they are going to need as first-year university students; using a dictionary, encyclopedia, library catalog and basic database resources.

The Teen College group was a smaller and slightly more experienced, since many of the students have been a part of Kids College or Teen College in previous summers. The

opportunities for obtaining specialized information literacy concepts and searching skills were greater! The group of 10-15 teens met in various locations around the library to conduct research hunts using encyclopedias, electronic reference sources and other materials that most teens don't even know exist. Working together in groups and putting resources to work to find good information is a life-skill many adults would like the opportunity to have.

I feel that these programs developed the children and teens as intellectuals, gave them confidence in using a college Library and its resources, plus gave them a taste of the hustle of college life!

For more information about the University of North Carolina at Pembroke Regional Center youth outreach activities; http://www.uncp.edu/rc/youth/

Special thanks to my partners in this program, the librarians and picture books of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and informationliteracy.org for sharing the wealth!

Submission requirements for North Carolina Libraries

Eletronic articles can be submitted online at http://www.ncl.ecu.edu

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- We have a rolling deadline, articles are juried when received.
- Publication of approved articles is in about 3-9 months depending on space available.
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