

The Gourd of Wisdom Institute

FOR STRATEGIC LEARNING, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

CAPABILITY STATEMENT

Lead Consultants:

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HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The Gourd of Wisdom (TGOW), founded in 1997, is a private, professional research & development institute and educational service provider. We provide high-quality research, up-to-date training, and program implementation. Our associates remain committed to principles that foster strategic learning and mastery of development skills associated with action research for positive social change in a continued effort to attain and safeguard universal human rights for all members of society.

TGOW Institute's *mission* is to provide quality research, training, & development programs that:

- Address community-based problems through participatory action research;
- Support the development of strategic skills among student and community residents that foster their commitment to academic excellence and lifelong learning;
- Address development needs of individuals, communities, and organizations through strategic planning, program implementation, project management, and program assessment/ evaluation; &
- Enhance the skills and teaching strategies of professional educators, particularly in the use of computer-mediated instructional techniques that support their effectiveness as master educators.

This mission can be summed up into one simple motto: *“Harvesting knowledge that endures for a lifetime!”* To this purpose, we have developed satellite offices in four (4) locations: Itta Bena (MS), Atlanta (GA), Greensboro (NC) and Fort Washington (MD).

CAPABILITIES STATEMENT

TGOW has mastered the art of facilitating structured strategic program development and training workshops. Our practical experience is both extensive and global providing services to educators, students and grassroots organizations. A primary goal of our program offerings is to reach a variety of groups in a non-convention setting. Particularly, the use of state parks and lodges serve as ideal locations for some of our retreat workshops. Although promoting programs that provide participants to be “at one with nature” our program offerings are not limited to, but rather include infusion of practical applications and customized on-site program implementation options to best serve the needs of our clients. TGOW’s commitment to making positive social change locally, nationally and abroad is exhibited in work that has been conducted with faculty and administrative staff of education institutions as well as private entities to develop, implement and evaluate Service Learning Programs and Action Research Projects. These projects have been exemplified in TGOW Institute’s Professional Training and Development Workshop Series for Youth. These series of program offerings are designed to foster structured critical dialogue, conflict management, and professional skill development among K-12 and college students within the framework of intensive, customized workshops.

Workshop facilitators employ a skillful combination of methods to explore themes, topics and materials. This combination includes technology enhanced seminar presentations, structured small group critical dialogue and interactive projects, and guiding individual workshop assignments. Each workshop is also supported by our uniquely designed *Electronic Learning Forum* [ELF]. This web-based forum provides participants with a full range of on-line development resources & support during the workshop series and beyond.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES FOR YOUTH

TGOW has particular interest and experience in the engagement of youth projects. Our youth development program offerings seek to address the growing number of “at-risk”, economically or socially disadvantaged youth by addressing the underlying issues surrounding their proneness to deviant and unhealthy behavior. Our multi-component program curriculum addresses the unique needs of youth to help them achieve academically in an engaging environment. Since, we believe that our youth should be given opportunities early in their education to stay competitive in the world arena of communications, writing, arts, sciences, technology and more, the programs that we offer more than exceed this expectation.

TGOW associates pride themselves on establishing a set of affective, behavioral and cognitive outcomes as a *minimum requirement* of all of our strategic learners and program participants. At the completion of each program participants and facilitators conduct a Program Review. The following descriptions outline our program offerings.

Participatory Action Research Project: TGOW – PARP (Parts I and II)

The participatory action research project is an on-going research project for students to affect change by addressing an issue of concern. By *participatory*, we mean that students will play a direct role in exploring all phases of the research process: from identifying an issue of concern, creating a research outline/model, development of survey instruments, conducting field research, collecting and analyzing data, and synthesizing findings into a final research report. The action research project culmination consists of an oral presentation to peers, parents and community leaders. The engagement in this research process is so extensive that students are strategizing ways to make a positive change in their communities, while enhancing individual confidence, practice and results-oriented research, group participation and communication skills. University Graduate Researchers are paired with program participants to assist with the progressiveness of the research project.

Service-Learning for Social Change: TGOW – SLSC

This workshop series focuses on effective strategies that K-12 students, teachers & college educators can employ when infusing service-learning requirements into existing academic curriculum. Service Learning courses are designed to promote positive social change in school systems by engaging students in Participatory Action Research Projects that address a need specified by a community-based organization. The collaborative design of each phase of the project incorporates real life application, reflection, and student ownership of the project to foster strong development and cognitive outcomes in a structured learning setting.

Enhancing Critical & Creative Thought: TGOW – ECCT

This workshop is a powerful vehicle in which young people will engage in the process of problem-solving and critical thinking strategies. It reviews past scholarship and current research on effective ways to enhance critical & creative thinking among students, and presents tested strategies for infusing assignments into the existing courses that expand the analytical capacity of students. *Enhancing Critical and Creative Thoughts* workshops promote self-confidence, personal responsibility, accountability, cultural diversity awareness, leadership development, peer mediation and adaption to change.

Creative Arts, Sciences and Technology: TGOW – CAST

This workshop integrates knowledge and passion for creative arts with theory and practical applications to the study of math, science and technology. This program is specifically designed to bridge the digital divide for at-risk youth while infusing valuable skills such as logic, organizational teamwork, and patience to enhance development outcomes. Participants will have the opportunity to develop their action research models with a focus on Music and Arts, Robotics, Aerospace Technology, Paleontology, Computer Animation and Chemistry fused curriculum.

TGOW – PMED: Peer Mediation Workshop Series

This workshop series includes several components to addresses the potential risk behaviors that are commonly initiated during adolescent years. The objectives are to provide encouragement while allowing the youth to operate in leadership and facilitation capacities and to develop meaningful relationships with other youth and adults. Peer mediation is a useful way to provide healthy conflict management strategies using non-threatening and cooperative methods that re-channel energy into positive outputs. These workshops promote an atmosphere of inclusiveness, cooperation, community building, respect, self-esteem, decision-making, observation, negotiation, and inter-cultural communication to prepare youth for the culturally diverse world. These workshops unfold over a series of phases often facilitated in state parks or other non-conventional locations. A highlight of some of the peer mediation workshop components are:

International Pen Pal Program (IPPP) promotes communication and academic exchange between youth in U.S. and partnering institutions abroad (Jamaica, West Africa, Brazil, Colombia). Students will create their own electronic learning forum to exchange photos, personal stories, and engage in chatting sessions and other structured dialogue related to course assignments. Students that successfully complete all prerequisites are invited to participate in the study abroad program and annual *International Youth Takeover Conference* to bridge the distance gap. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for research, networking building, and promote cultural pride as students will serve as Young Griots in African tribal communities and Youth Cultural Ambassadors.

Conflict Management Training (CMT) encourages individuals to analyze their behavior and address steps on dealing with dispute resolution. Participants learn that in the thread of dealing with conflict, they must also learn the critical elements of discovery and learning even as they will deal with rejection and denial. Students would help create a *Crisis Intervention Center* which would serve as an on-line resource center and crisis hot-line. Students would facilitate sessions on creating a *Conflict Resolution Manual* specific to their location. The program also encourages participation in mock court proceedings and issue debates.

Juvenile Justice Diversion Project (JJDP) is intended to divert status offenders into crisis intervention training and development programs to prevent youth that have been detained of engaging in subsequent delinquent behavior. Participants will work on strengthening decision-making skills and interpersonal development.

ACADEMICS: DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

At TGOW Institute our Center for Life-long and Continuing Education offers a challenging set of education and certified training programs for youth, adult learners and educators. Training facilitators pride themselves on establishing a set of affective, behavioral and cognitive outcomes as a *minimum requirement* of all of our strategic learners and program participants. At the completion of each program participants and facilitators conduct a **Program Review** and **Formal Evaluation**.

TGOW Institute offers the following university accredited courses in an online learning format:

- ◆ African American Art History: Harlem Renaissance
- ◆ The African American Church
- ◆ American Government & Politics of Everyday Life
- ◆ Business and Technical Writing
- ◆ Culture Diversity in the 21st Century
- ◆ Environmental Biology
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Introduction to Critical and Creative Thinking
- ◆ Key Issues in African American History
- ◆ Music History of Black America
- ◆ Non-Western Writers: Caribbean
- ◆ Survey History of African American History
- ◆ Survey History of Black Africa

TGOW Institute offers the following professional training and development workshop series:

- ◆ On-Line Instructional Techniques for Educators
- ◆ Enhancing Creative and Critical Thought
- ◆ Designing Service-Learning for Social Change
- ◆ Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the Politics of Everyday Life in America
- ◆ Valuing Cultural Diversity in the 21st Century
- ◆ Participatory Action Research
- ◆ Youth Leadership Development and Training
- ◆ Peer Mediation
- ◆ Creative Music, Arts, Sciences, and Technology
- ◆ At One with Nature

Each of our multi-component programs have **customized curriculum** which will address the unique needs of our participants to help them achieve academically, socially, and physically in an engaging environment. In addition, TGOW Institute's programs include a focus on healthy lifestyles, environmental awareness, conflict management and other necessary elements of personal and professional achievement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AND OTHER SERVICES

On-line Instructional Techniques for Educators (O-LITE!)

Since many of the aforementioned youth programs encourage participation with educators, it is encouraged that institutions and organization leaders enroll in O-LITE! workshops to master pedagogical techniques useful in facilitating quality instruction via the Internet to continue in the development of application of programs that are implemented. Instruction may occur in both asynchronous [file exchange system] or synchronous [real-time interactivity] formats. Among the topics examined are: Syllabus construction, On-line chatting, Electronic Learning Forum design & management, and Web-based research strategies.

TGOW Institute is also well equipped to develop customized training programs for organizations, agencies or institutions that prefer to implement a training or research strategy that is created to directly address their specific mission and needs. Our other services include:

- Instructional Technology Assessment
- Independent Study Program Offerings
- Training & Professional Development Workshops
- Distance Education Planning & Evaluation
- Distance Learning Curriculum Design & Development
- Program Planning, Implementation, Management & Evaluation
- Conflict Resolution and Management
- Professional Facilitation
- Customized Skill Development

TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS

With over 50 years of combined experience in research, program design, implementation, evaluation and management, our strong consultant team can collectively attest that we have proudly provided specialized and timely delivery of services that more than exceed the expectations of our contractual agreements. Each of the lead Associates have advanced degrees in the Social Sciences and, as such, we teach and model responsible citizenship in our communities.

Specialty areas include, but are not limited to:

- Field Research and Community Needs Assessment
- Development and Implementation of Training Programs
- Design, Develop, Implementation and Evaluation of Course Design Models
- Model of Conflict Management Systems
- Distance Learning Management and Support
- Program Evaluation Experience
- Design and Administration of Situational Analysis
- Maintenance of GIS/CATI Laboratory and Blaise Survey Research Facility to produce geo-spatial socio-economic statistical data, mapping, survey research analysis.
- Budget and Financial Analysis

RELATED PROJECTS

TGOW has developed years of experience with public and private sector customers in the United States and abroad. The following is an abridged list of some of the projects that TGOW has successfully completed.

Community-based Programs:

- ◆ “Parent Interest” Survey Design, Assessment & Analysis, Indianola Public Schools, Superintendent’s Office, Indianola, MS [Fall 2007]
- ◆ B.B. King Blues Museum Youth Charrette, B.B. King Museum, Indianola, MS [2007]
- ◆ “What is Your Blues IQ?” Youth Knowledge Survey Design, Assessment & Analysis for the B.B. King Museum & Education Interpretive Center, Indianola, MS. Administered at the National Africa American Leadership Conference, Rust College, Holly Springs, MS [Winter 2006]
- ◆ WizKidz Technology Centers, Proposal and Program Development, Atlanta, GA [Winter 2006]
- ◆ Youth Innovation Movement Solutions, Proposal Development, Oxford, MS [January 2005]
- ◆ Johnny B. Thomas Computer-Assisted Afterschool Program, Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, Glendora, MS [2005]
- ◆ “Train-the-Trainer” Training Facilitation, Citizens for a Better Greenville, Greenville, MS [August 2005]
- ◆ Alternatives Choices Corporation, Juvenile Justice Research and Conflict Management Survey Implementation, Atlanta, GA [Spring 2001]
- ◆ Unwed Teen Mother Drop-out Prevention & Educational Re-Entry Program, State of Ohio Pilot Program, Dayton Urban League, Inc., OH [1986/87]
- ◆ Youth Self-Employment Program, Federal Program, Springfield Urban League, Springfield, OH [1986]

Secondary/University Programs:

- ◆ On-line Instructional Techniques for Educators, A Faculty & Administrative Staff Training Program for Managing Distance Learning, WU/Climb ADP, Wilberforce University, OH [2004 - 2008]
- ◆ WU/Climb On-line, Distance Education Delivery and Academic Support System, Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, OH [1997-2008]
- ◆ FOR ME Music Education Program, Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA [Fall 2006]
- ◆ Blues-in-the-Schools, Delta Blues Legends Tour, Baptist Town Community, Greenwood, MS [2006/07]
- ◆ Service-Learning for Social Change, Student, Teacher & Grassroots Organization Training Program and Implementation Action Research Team, Greenville Weston High School, Greenville, MS [Summer 2005]
- ◆ Minority Prison Diversion Project, Facilitation of Training, Greensboro, NC [February 1998]
- ◆ Service-Learning Program Evaluator, Hampton University, VA [1994 - 1997]
- ◆ Montgomery County Multi-Cultural Exchange Program for Elementary School Children, Montgomery County Public School District [1993/94]

International Programs:

- ◆ The Golden Triangle Customized Study Abroad and Sister Cities Initiative, Program Development, West Africa, Jamaica, and U.S. [December 2006]
- ◆ Alternative Dispute Resolution Program, Ford Foundation Program Evaluator, Capital University Law School Jamaica Bar Association, Kingston, Jamaica [Spring, Summer & Fall 1991]
- ◆ Distance Learning Capacity Assessment for UNCF, Christian Univ., San Andres Island, Columbia [Winter 2003]

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TGOW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PLEASE VISIT:

www.tgowinstitute.com

