Shaping the Next Generation

Without meaningful experiences that can be used after graduation leading into college and expanding into a career, students are at a disadvantage to growing to their full potential. The National Defense Act of 1916 allowed the JROTC program to be established in the United States, active duty military personnel were given the equipment needed to run the program in a high school (Army ROTC par. 1). Through the establishment of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) in school, students gain life changing experiences. In the Title Ten of the U.S. Code it states that the purpose of the JROTC program is to instill the students in the United States with secondary education opportunities to institute the values of citizenship, service to the nation, and a personal sense of accomplishment (10 U.S. Code par. 2). Students that are introduced to JROTC are exposed to experiences that can intellectually impact the way the students think. The JROTC program is an integral component of advancing education systems because it promotes student leadership, creates better citizens, and prepares students for real-world situations.

The JROTC program encourages students to take on leadership roles, which molds students into leaders. From the beginning of joining JROTC, there is a natural push for students to step up and take the lead. The participating students are allowing a change to happen in their lives through the guidance of the instructors and the upperclass students that enhance their character (Bulach par. 1). Through the establishment of different authoritative levels, students
are exposed to the proper way to lead others. For each position within the cadet authority levels in JROTC, there is a corresponding rank (Carter 15). It can be clearly seen that the more responsibility a leadership position has the more student an individual is control of. Because the JROTC program is structured like the military, the students learn how to advocate for themselves to move through the chain of command. “An effective chain of command can guarantee that all members are on the same team, working hard to accomplish their individual tasks and those of the units. The chain of command depends on team members having various duties,” everyone working together is essential to making the the program run as it should (Carter 12). The student leaders in JROTC exhibit traits that new incoming cadets look up to.

The Seven Army Values and the Eleven Principles of Leadership help student to become well-rounded leaders. The Eleven Principles of Leadership consist of a leader being technically proficient, seeking and taking responsibility for one’s actions, making sound and timely decisions, setting the example, knowing one’s personnel and looking out for their welfare, keeping one’s followers informed, developing a sense of responsibility in your follower, ensuring task are understood, supervised, and accomplished; building a team, and employing one’s team in accordance with its capabilities; all of these principles are exhibited by great leaders and know how to instill them into other cadets (Carter 101-107). The most important thing for leaders to do is set the example for the cadets. It is important for individuals to be the change that would like to be seen. Through upholding the Seven Army Values, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage; leaders will continuously improve in their leadership capabilities (Carter 87-90). When JROTC cadets set the example, it is not only for fellow cadets but the whole school as well. According to Bulach, “if character traits
can be taught, these students should exhibit superior behavior on these character traits than other student in the same high school who are not enrolled in JROTC;” however, the exposure to these traits do not only benefit just students enrolled in JROTC it gives other students something to look up to (Bulach par. 5). The JROTC program aids its students in gaining leadership experience by giving students the opportunity to lead. Student learn how to be active in their schools and communities. The leadership skills student learn in a high school JROTC class can be used to future jobs and internships.

Colonel Clark, the directors of the CMS JROTC programs, expresses that, “more than anything, JROTC is about service to others. We want cadets to have a heart for service to others (Leggett par. 9).” Within their JROTC experience, students explore the ventures of how to be the model citizen from learning first aid to the foundation of the United States. The student learn how to treat a wide range of injuries from the JROTC curriculum; the following injuries are lessons that the students learn how to treat: bleeding, shock, fractures, burns, poisons, bruises, heat, cold weather, and animal related wounds (Pruitt 39-86). The students are encouraged to put their knowledge of first aid to practice in the event that someone gets hurt. Students learn about the Good Samaritan Law, which was designed to protect rescuers by granting them immunity against lawsuit, as long as rescuers are acting in good faith, to inspire them to help others without the fear of blame for any unexpected troubles (Pruitt 24). From the research of Lutz and Bartlett it states “that proponents claim that [the JROTC program] instills discipline and changes the behavior of unruly teenagers so they can be productive citizens (Bulach par. 4).” When the instructors teach the students about how to become better citizens, student know how to give back more locally and nationally. Because of the high standard set by JROTC instructors,
students are pushed to limits that some never thought were in their reach (Bulach par. 4). Many believe that cadets in the JROTC programs are some of the best student citizens (Leggett par. 12). With the JROTC program students will ultimately learn how to cooperate with a variety of people, regardless of any difference, and focus on serving others for the greater good of the community.

The building of character attributes of students is not the only focus of the program; the JROTC instructors care about the students’ success after their high school graduation. The critics of the the JROTC program understand the benefits of the program, which can be seen in the following testimony: “In my utopia, this program would not need to exist, but in the real world it might just offer the education, discipline, and sense of community that many of our young people need. Indeed, to those of our youth who otherwise may have their choices limited to the Bloods, the Crips, and flipping burgers, it may be a lifesaver (Rethinking Junior ROTC par. 2).”

The JROTC program’s instillment of leadership prepares students for future leadership roles (Bulach par. 10). Students are pushed out of their comfort zones in order to grow. Most people struggle with public speaking. The students in JROTC are usually standing in front of a group leading, but that does not mean that public speaking comes easy to them. Over the course of being enrolled in the JROTC program, students study a lesson on becoming a better speaker and learn the different types of speeches that can be given. Students learn the importance of practicing speeches before giving the speech, especially if speaking in front of people is not easy for that particular student (Sukienniuk 177-124). Learning how to make choices are essential to growing up, even if the choice we make are not always the right choice. In one of the lessons in
the Leadership Education and Training handbooks, students explore processes to help them with
the decision making process for complicated situations (Sukienniuk 231-234).

Continuing with the valuable information JROTC gives to their students, there is a
financial literacy lesson that senior JROTC cadets take. The NEFE High School Financial
Planning Program exposes students to learning the importance of setting up a budget that works
for their lifestyle. The first two things that are essential to do during financial planning is to
establish a budget and pay yourself first to ensure that money is never funny (Sukienniuk 271).
Of all of the components of the JROTC curriculum, the most every day to day impact of working
with others is the most valuable. In every workplace there are going to co-worker that individuals
have no choice but to work with, the same happens in the JROTC program within the chain of
command. Colonel Clark expresses that “[in the program] we talk about how [the students] can
build on their strengths, how to resolve conflict, collaborate and think creatively,” which shows
that learning to work with others is essential to having good relations with co-workers (Leggett
par. 10). JROTC gives students experience on how to deal with all types of dilemmas. Students
are given the opportunity to be apart of JROTC every year in high school, which gives students
experience of growing accustomed to working with the same individuals. The exposure to the
JROTC program allows students to grow in areas that can be used in everyday life, not only just
the non essential military knowledge.

The following graph illustrates the graduation rate of different demographics within
Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) in North Carolina. The CMS JROTC aspires for 100
percent of seniors to graduate with their peers, and to be accepted to post-high school institutions
of higher learning and training, which can be seen in the 98 percent graduation rate (Leggett par.
5). The goal of the JROTC programs within the CMS district is to focus on students next phase in their lives, regardless of race. The graph depicts that the rate of graduation is inattentive to what group an individual comes from expressing that the students in CMS schools are excelling with or without JROTC. On average, students who take JROTC have a 13 percent higher chance of graduation, but the difference between the percentages of are not significant enough to deem student who take JROTC better than those who do not. The graph exemplifies the support that JROTC supplies to its students because of the higher standard students are held to, which encourages student to push themselves beyond what is expected.

![Graduation Rate Based on Demographics within Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools](chart)

JROTC has been around for 100 years, impacting the lives of students by promoting leadership, creating better citizens, and preparing students for the real-world. JROTC has successfully advanced the education system. With the help of JROTC program students are able
to grow beyond just striving to be a high school graduate. The experiences that students involved in JROTC are exposure to change their views of the world through all the lesson learned consciously and unconsciously. The implementation of the JROTC program should be expanded to all 31 high schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg District to allow the JROTC program to make a larger impact Charlotte.
Bibliography


This is a primary source because the Title 10 of the United States Code is a log of all of the official business that the federal government conducts.


