As a student, the most frustrating part of getting an education, is learning about world problems that are out of our control. For example, in GEOS 170 students learn about the devastating and rapid effects that carbon emissions are having on the global environment. While the causes and effects of climate change are known generally by most people, it is impossible to comprehend the full importance of this issue until you know the details. In a variety of classes that cover many different topics, students often learn about subjects that they feel more people should be aware of and understand, but as just another student, what power do you hold to make a difference?

This is the basic idea behind Creating Change. Creating Change is a club that allows University of Arizona students to pick a topic that they care about and think more people should know about, and teach that topic to a local classroom. This would allow college students to explore an interest they are passionate about on a deeper level, in addition to connecting them to the greater Tucson community. Moreover, pupils tend to learn more from teachers who care about the content they are teaching; since the college students would be teaching about a subject they chose, they would surely be passionate about the content.
The program would be different than a normal club on campus, in that students do not need to be a part of the club for the entire semester or year. This club offers support for the student wanting to teach the topic. The student might learn about the club from a professor offering extra credit for participation in Creating Change or from a professor who thinks the student might be interested in the club. The student could also learn about the club by looking for volunteer opportunities or community involvement programs. While this club focuses on education, membership to the club is not limited to students majoring in education, it is open to all students at the University of Arizona who are interested in making an impact. However the student discovers the club, once they do the first step is for them to choose what they want to teach. This should be a topic they really care about, seeing as they have to put quite a bit of work into creating a lesson plan and then teaching it. As the club gets more established, some material from past student lessons will be available for future students to either use, get an idea from, or supplement their own lesson.

The purpose of the club would be to provide a middleman between the student who wants to teach a subject and the teachers at the local Tucson schools who are interested in having students teach their classrooms. We would want the teacher to be able to approve of the lesson that is to be taught, so that the teacher could perhaps expose their students to this subject beforehand so they have a little understanding of what the student is to each. We believe the easiest way to accomplish this would be to have an email list of all of the teachers who are willing to participate in this program. When a student comes to the club with an idea of what they would like to teach and to
which grade level, the leaders of the club would send out an email to teachers they think might be interested, and put the college student in contact with ones that show an interest.

While we believe many students would make this a one time event, being that it would be much work on their part, we would hope that some students might choose to stay in the club, and continue to teach lessons to younger students. For a very interesting class that the student has a large passion for, the student might talk to a teacher about coming to their classroom monthly with future lessons that build on each other. On the other hand, if a student has several classes they are interested in, they could teach a variety of different lessons to a variety of different grades, allowing them even more exposure to different schools and classrooms. Overall this club would provide a wide range of flexibility for the students interested and they will most likely get out of it what they put into it.

To start, the student would have to write a paragraph proposal about what they would like to teach, and share their ideas for how they would create their lesson. The reason for this is to make sure that it is a topic appropriate for underage students, as well as a way to make sure that the student is interested enough in the program and their topic to do a good job. Creating Change would act as a resource for the students, offering advice and help for the students who are approved as they create their lesson plan.

The length of the lesson is variable but probably shouldn’t exceed an hour. This is because the lesson has to fit in with the teachers’ schedule; if it is too long it will be a
burden on the class and if it is too short, it might leave the class with nothing to do. Also, it can be hard to create enough material and to hold the attention of a class for that long a period of time. The time of the lesson will depend on the topic of the lesson and the age it is being taught to.

An important consideration that must be made is what age group the lesson plan should be geared to and how to make content for that age group. If someone wants to teach a lesson about astronomy, there is a large variety of age groups it could be appropriate for, depending on how in depth the lesson goes. It would be up to the student to determine what age group they would like to teach their lesson to. The student must take into account the fact that the younger the students, the more broad the lesson must be in order for the student to understand and be interested in the topic. The higher the age, the more in-depth the student can be on their topic.

For our mock lessons on nutrition and recycling, we created examples of worksheets that we believe would keep the student engaged while teaching them important facts in a simple manner. While we believe creating a worksheet would be a very effective way to go about creating a lesson, the college student would have the freedom to create a lesson however they wanted. If they didn’t like the idea of using a worksheet, they could create a powerpoint presentation, or interactive activity that would engage the students. We know that the more hands-on the lesson is, the more effective it will be, so we would definitely encourage the student to create some form of an interactive activity in order to have a lasting impact on the children.
Once the student has created their final lesson plan, it must be approved by the leaders of the club. In certain cases the student might benefit in running through the lesson in front of other club members in order to feel more comfortable with the material and talking in front of other people. When the student is ready, it is then the club’s job to reach out to the local teachers. Eventually Creating Change will have strong relationships with the schools and the teachers, but at first it will be hard to get them to trust that we will be providing valuable and reliable content. To start this relationship, club leaders might have to meet with the teacher and administrator in order to create a rapport. The process of getting the lessons checked by the leaders of Creating Change is crucial, in that we would like for Creating Change to develop a decent, credible reputation among the teachers and staff at the local Tucson elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

As the club becomes more established, an email will be sent out to the relevant teachers when a lesson plan becomes ready. The email will explain the content that will be covered in the lesson, in addition to information about the student wishing to teach the lesson. This information is important because the teacher has to trust the student that comes into the classroom. That teacher needs to know that the student will take this project seriously and cares about his/her education. Also, the club will connect the U of A student with the teacher by providing their contact information, which will allow the student and teacher to coordinate as needed.

If one or more of the teachers on the email list are interested, Creating Change will provide the college student with the contact information for the interested teachers
as they will then be responsible for continuing the email communication with that teacher. The teacher might have questions or wish to know more about what the student plans to do in the classroom. It is possible that the teacher might want to meet with the student before hand as well. The college student must respond promptly and accurately in order to make sure the teacher is comfortable with them coming and giving the lesson. Finally, the two will establish the time that the lesson will take place.

Creating Change will begin developing relationships with the schools within walking distance of the University of Arizona first (including Mansfield Middle School and Tucson High Magnet School), and as the club grows, it may start forming connections with other schools throughout the Tucson community. The main reason Creating Change would like to begin with the schools closest to campus is because it will be easiest for the U of A students. This club would most likely not be able to provide transportation for the participating students, due to the fact that it will probably only be a couple of students traveling to a school at a time, not a bus full of students. It would be the most cost efficient and the most convenient to develop relationships with the schools within walking distance since many college students do not own cars. Another reason we would like to create connections with the closest schools first, is because, given their short distance from the university, these schools should have the most influence from U of A. The schools within walking distance of the university see the daily life on campus and interact with more of our students and events than Tucson schools miles away. We believe it would be best to begin developing a closer, educational connection with these schools prior to schools at a greater distance from campus.
We believe this club would have a positive impact on the student teaching the lesson, as well as the younger students who are being taught. In making the lesson plan, the college student would be able to learn their subject matter on a much deeper level. Even somebody who thinks they are an expert on their subject would still have to take the time to really think and plan their lesson, in most cases allowing them to understand their subject more deeply. Additionally, research has shown that information that is taught is retained much more than if one was to just study it. By going out and teaching the lesson, the college student will be able to remember their subject much more, and in almost all cases would do better in the class overall, even by teaching just a small part of what they learned in class.

Another impact this would have on the student is improving their communication and responsibility skills. We understand that this club would be quite a bit of work for the student, being that they would have to develop the lesson on their own, and decide to whom they would like to teach it. By putting this on the student, we believe they will grow more responsible, and better able to handle future events that bring about a lot of stress. Additionally, it can be very hard for students to go up in front of a classroom and talk, even to younger kids. We hope that by giving students this opportunity, they will have not only learned more about the subject they taught, but will have also had the chance to strengthen their public speaking skills and develop a confidence within themselves.

Along with benefiting the college student in many ways, we also believe this club would benefit the younger students who are being taught the lesson. Like stated above,
it has been proven that students learn better from teachers who are passionate about what they are teaching. We know that in order to go through the voluntary work of creating a lesson, the college student will be very passionate about what they choose to teach, and therefore teach it in a more interesting and thoughtful way than someone who has no interest in the subject. Furthermore, from past experience, we believe that the younger students will admire the college student who has taken their time to come into their classroom to teach them. We believe this admiration will lead the children to pay more attention to the college student, and really try to engage in the lesson that the student has prepared.

In addition to truly grasping the subject, we aim to have a long term impact on the students that are being taught. The wide variety of subjects that could be taught would expose them to subjects that they wouldn’t normally be taught. One goal of Creating Change is for the University of Arizona students who participate to share their passion on a subject and to hopefully spark a passion within the younger students. We hope for some students to spark an interest in a possible career, major, or perhaps a new hobby that they could take on. For example, if an MIS student chose to teach a broad lesson regarding information they have learned in their MIS classes, it could possibly spark an interest in a younger student to learn more about MIS specifically or about business in general. Perhaps this will even cause a student to pursue MIS or business as a major or field of study when they enter college.

As well as benefiting all of the students involved, Creating Change would be beneficial to the University of Arizona as a whole and show the university in a positive
light to the Tucson community. It is clear that the University of Arizona is a large part of Tucson, and Creating Change would create another link between the university and the Tucson community as a whole. The community would be able to see that our university cares about developing a relationship with others, outside of our campus, and teaching the younger generations. We feel that the Tucson community would really admire the university for these efforts in showing an interest in expanding the educational influence to younger students, rather than just students at the university. This club would allow college students who feel disconnected from their community outside of campus, to really connect with the greater community in a positive way.

Overall, Creating Change is a U-Provement idea for the University of Arizona that can plausibly enhance the educational experience for students of the university and also for students at local Tucson schools as well. There are many positive outcomes that could come from this potential club, including the development of educational and professional connections between the University of Arizona and the surrounding Tucson community, new learning experiences for students in elementary, middle, and high schools near campus, and also a unique, voluntary, and educational experience for the college students that participate. There are realistically no negatives to this potential U-Provement club, so why not create change and develop Creating Change?
Works Cited
