

Service Learning in Dance
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San Antonio College students registered in “Performance Dance” under the Department of Kinesiology and Dance partnered with JOVEN a non-profit organization that states its mission is to “develop character and resiliency in children by providing innovative, exciting programs and structured alternative activities that are designed to help them succeed.

Project Description

Three days a week students from San Antonio College traveled to the JOVEN to teach dance to 45 students ages 4 to 14. San Antonio College students organized themselves into three teams. Teams choose the day of the week and dance style they would teach. Team members rotated being lead dance instructor for the children’s classes. Teams selected class music, planned the warm-up, loco motor movements across floor and choreographed a dance for their JOVEN class.

San Antonio College students caucus weekly to preparation for their JOVEN class. Class discussion included class structure, learning styles, technique, safety, and any problem that may have occurred.

Each semester the project culminates with a joint performance of the JOVEN and San Antonio College Students. The excitement and thrill of the performance is felt by both groups of dancers. JOVEN students are thrilled to share what they had learned with their family and friends. The JOVEN students leave the concert proud of their performance and the skills they had learned. The San Antonio College students are confident that their efforts have created such joy and accomplishment for the children. They exposed the children to the love of dance, an opportunity they may never have had the opportunity to participate. They planted the seed that college is a possibility in every child’s future. “The best thing is when at a performance they are so excited. It is the best feeling,” SAC student Marina Mendoza to Conexión Newspaper. To the San Antonio Express-News Mendoza stated, “We just fell in love with them. And to see them perform and do it so well, it was awesome.”

The Service Learning Project constituted 25% of the overall grade. It will be divided as follows: 10% working at JOVEN, 5% class preparation, 5% Performance, and 5% Reflection paper.

Goals for San Antonio College Students

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding the creative process of dance.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of preparing for a performance.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of collaborative skills.
4. Students will be acquainted with volunteerism and how they can contribute to their community.

Reflection Activities

Student maintained a journal to record team's activities and to serve as a base for their personal time management. Using their journals' and information from class discussions students prepared a reflection paper about their personal experiences with the Service Learning project to include how they developed as a dancer, the impact of the project on the JOVEN students, and changes to improve the program. Students were also video stating their thoughts on the project.

Impact on Students

While providing this service, SAC students have been given the opportunity to use the dance theory and skills learned in class. This collaboration has enriched the classroom learning experience by increasing their technical skills, dance movement vocabulary, gaining greater skills in creating dance, and sharing dance. They increased knowledge of preparing for a performance, organizing dancers, and a program. It also acquainted the students to volunteerism and how they can contribute to their community. "I really enjoyed this program. It was an opportunity I didn't expect. It's been worth the effort." SAC student Mary Thayer quoted to the San Antonio College Ranger.

Impact on Community

Dance addresses the need of children to express and communicate their ideas. Dance develops thinking skills through movement and developing dance vocabulary. Dance contributes to social skills. Dance is fun.

The primary Latino JOVEN students laughed and giggled as they moved around the dance floor. “I have a big smile when I dance,” a 7 year old quoted to the San Antonio Express and News. The students developed knowledge and skills of dance elements. JOVEN students were taught to perform memorized movement sequences with rhythmical accuracy in a variety of dance styles. This project provided the JOVEN community the opportunity to participate in a structured dance class and participate in a fun and successful performance for their friends and family.

Impact on College

The collaboration provided free publicity for the college and the partner agency as it created community support for both. The project was supported by San Antonio College Public Relation Department, Fox News First, WOAI News, San Antonio College Ranger, San Antonio Express News and Conxion News paper. The support provided extra enthusiasm for the project.