

# **Service Learning and Dance**

## **Presenter # 1**

George Ann Simpson  
Department of Kinesiology/Dance  
San Antonio College

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 35 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. SAC students exposed the children of JOVEN to the love of dance, an opportunity they may never have had the prospect to participate. SAC students 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 Conexion Newspaper. To the San Antonio Express and 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 of 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 recorded stating their thoughts on the project.

### **Impact on San Antonio College 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 JOVEN Students**

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. “The idea is to give them outside activities so that they learn more about themselves and the world and how to make good decisions” James Parsons, CEO for JOVEN quoted to the San Antonio Express and News.

The following are the words of Jessica Wilkerson the After-school Coordinator for JOVEN. “The first day of practice was a little scary for many of the kids because several were new to our program and had never danced before. Some were shy, others embraced the new style. Each child took the instruction and made it their own. Over the past few months it was encouraging to see some of the most timid blossom into confident little people.....Each time our children perform, they are able to feel a sense of accomplishment that only hard work and confidence can bring. Every performance is a catalyst in helping our children to embrace their talents, which helps them to develop an indescribable resilience.”

### **Impact on San Antonio College and JOVEN**

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 Conexion News paper. The support provided extra enthusiasm for the project.

### **Future of the Program**

The majority of San Antonio College students found the program to be beneficial to expanding their skills and helpful in reaching their dancing goals and potential. Two students dropped the course due to the time involvement the first session and one did not return the second session again due to time restraints.

A bulletin board recording the activities of the project is outside the dance studio. This has attracted several students interested in working with children and they have inquired about becoming a part of the program.

For the faculty member, it is important to constantly communicate with the community partner and the school's Service-Learning Coordinator. The faculty member must be flexible and prepared to adapt to the unexpected. The faculty member must be aware of the time obligation and be prepared to commit to the program.

For the future, the Performance Dance classes plan to keep Service-Learning as a part of the course.

**EDUC 1301: Introduction to the Teaching Profession**  
**Service Learning Project:**  
**Developing a Learning Game**

**Presenter #2**

G. Salvador Gutierrez  
San Antonio College  
San Antonio, TX

In this project, students are assigned the task of developing an age and grade level appropriate learning game. In addition to the game, a one page paper must be submitted citing: age and grade level, the TEKS, the teacher expectations of the game and the student learning outcome(s). In addition, the paper must explain the procedure of the game, cite which of the multiple intelligences are addressed and if any intrinsic rewards were offered.

Class time was devoted to assisting the students in developing their games. The learning game must be age and grade level appropriate, which means it must be addressed and supported by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Research time was used in class to introduce the TEKS by reading the Texas Education Agency's TEKS website. All the grade levels and content areas are addressed. The students were guided to interpreting the teacher expectations and the student learning outcomes in order to develop the game. Students were then required to choose a grade and content area and incorporate a student learning outcome. A rubric was distributed to the students so the assessment process would be clear.

In one particular class, a chapter on Diverse Learners was discussed. The importance of addressing the Multiple Intelligences was emphasized. A short DVD presentation was shown explaining the concept of multiple intelligences, as well as offering suggestions of lessons on how to reach the multiple

intelligences. After the presentation, students are asked to evaluate each learning game to assure that the multiple intelligences are addressed.

Another class day was devoted as a *Future-Teacher Staff Development Day*. During this dedicated day, students brought in materials needed to create their game. Class time was given so students would work collaboratively to fine tune the games. The instructor guided students with suggestions in designing their games.

GAME DAY! After a sufficient amount of time (3 weeks), students brought their games to class. Every student took their turn to address the class explaining the game in detail. The instructor used the rubric to assess the game.

Before the game can be played with their students during the service learning requirement, a class day was devoted to playing the games among the students.

Each student submitted their required essay. Every student had the opportunity to “show off” their game. After every game was introduced, all the students took time to play a game.

In conclusion, as part of the Final Exam, students are to submit a one page paper outlining their experience with playing the game among their Service-Learning students. In this paper, students reflected on the procedure used to introduce the game and the amount of enthusiasm expressed by the students in playing the game. Moreover, students reflected on areas of the game that needed revision, such as redesigning the game board or revising the game rules and procedures.