

International Dance: Building Communities through Dance



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Background Information

We gained much inspiration for this project from the Dance Education Program at the University of South Carolina which focuses on inclusion, involvement and the community. We also attended the Dance and Child International Conference (DaCi) this past summer in Texas. Here we got to put ourselves in an intergenerational classroom and experience what we considered to be magic: Dancers ages 6-65 worked together to learn more about themselves and others through dance.



Goals

In our research, we found two needs in which we focused our research on:

A Need for Inclusion of Compassion in Curricula

There is a lack of compassion within our society and world. An example of this can be seen with the celebration of Osama Bin Laden's death in America. Celebrating another human being's death does not demonstrate compassion. Through kinesthetic expression, participants will learn and practice community building. Within an intergenerational community, dance provides a method of self-expression and communication of ideas, allowing participants to grow internally and externally. In the course of participating in dance class sessions, our participants will grow to know themselves, to learn about others, and to learn to become compassionate with those in society.

A Need to Bridge Generation Gap

There is a major generation gap between seniors and elementary children. Stereotyping and ageism is prevalent between these age groups; Through our compassion curriculum implemented within the dance class sessions, their mindsets of this stereotyping will dissolve and participants will learn to share compassion for each other in a community setting.



References

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Methods

Session Structure:

- 4 age specific sessions for the two age groups
- 8 intergenerational sessions

The same curricula will be used for all participants between the two age groups. Each lesson will use a children's book to support an element of compassion and understanding differences between the two age groups. There will also be collaborative problem solving improvisations that the participants will partake in. At the end of each session, they will create choreography together based on what they learned about the element of compassion shared within that class.

Curricula

Curricula guided by

- Seeds of Compassion Initiative
- Educational scholars: Dewey, Piaget, Banks, Vygotsky, Stinson and Bond

Elements of compassion:

- Understanding
- Sharing
- Helping
- Attitudes

Choreography

Participants will:

- Collaborate to create short dances
- Problem solve on compassion issue topics
- Explore ways to dance together that are compatible for both age groups
- Discover movements which reflect the message of compassion

Pedagogy for Inclusion

Participants will recognize the value of

- Themselves
- Every person participating as an individual
- The group as a whole

Community collaboration will take place during the choreography section of each lesson, as well as time for conversation and discussion towards the end of the sessions, followed by a time of personal reflection for each individual.



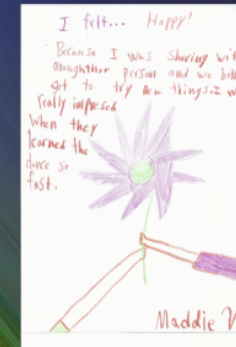
Anticipated Outcomes

Building community with intergenerational dance

Through our sessions, we hope to bridge the generation gap prevalent in our world. We hope that as a result of these sessions, the participants will learn to create a stronger community outside of the classroom. We also aim for them to be able to understand compassion within the dance/community sessions and, later to be carried into society.

Changing Attitudes

We will discuss stigmas, stereotypes, and misunderstandings about the two age groups. We hope that these discussions will lead the participants to connect on a deep level between each other so as to alter their personal view of differences between the age groups. Participants will practice communication, sharing, and collaborating, demonstrating compassion with and for each other. Through the course of the research, we hope to modify their mindset about the differences between the different age groups from skepticism to optimism.



From a student after participating in a compassion-centered dance exercise from our curriculum.

Acknowledgements

The USC Undergraduate scholar program, Julie Morris

Chair and Artistic Director, Jim Hunter

Advisor and Director of the USC Dance Education program, Dr. Mila Parrish

Director of the USC Dance Program, Susan Anderson

