

Instructionally Related Activities Report Form

SPONSOR: Dr. Annie White

PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT: Early Childhood Studies

ACTIVITY TITLE: Early Childhood Studies and Performing Arts: Narrative Inquiry at Santa Rosa Island

DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY: November 22-24, 2019

Please submit via email to the IRA Coordinator along with any supporting documentation at david.daniels@csuci.edu within 30 days after the activity. Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!

A. ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;

The Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) funded a Santa Rosa Island (SRI) trip for the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) course 463, “Creating and Supporting Reciprocal Family and Community Networks” and the Performing Art Program (PA) courses, “Understanding Dance & Music in Elementary Education and PADA 151 “Conditioning for Dancers”. This interdisciplinary collaboration at the SRI provided ECS and PA students’ opportunity to combine a narrative inquiry course assignment with modalities of interpretive dance and theater. The SRI trip provided students opportunity to engage in creative work through critical reflection and personal self-identity. The SRI trip took place during fall 2019 and included cross-cultural interaction, reflection, self-awareness, and a transformational learning experience for students. This experience allowed students from different disciplines to link their social and cultural identities through increased awareness of self and others through deep self-reflection, shared through creative expression of movement and theater. Students’ participated in narrative inquiry through journal writing, small and large group work, interpretive movement, and improvisation acting.

Students shared with peers’ their social and cultural identities which led to culturally responsive interactions. Student written reflections were used to help student inquiry and participatory research. The purpose of this project included students gaining deeper understanding of social and cultural identities through narrative inquiry in the Learning Stories (storytelling) format referred to as My Stories. Student My Stories were shared individually and collectively and culminated in improvisation acting. The SRI provided the optimal safe environment for student narrative investigations in a prime

topographically diverse setting, which supported high impact practices, while creating a culture of inquiry and community of learners.

This IRA funded trip to the SRI created an amazing opportunity for students to develop a strong sense of community, a deeper sense of self identify, and a transformative experience for students. The SRI trip connected ECS and PA dance students through sharing narrative stories on the SRI. This meaningful experience for student's fostered risk-taking through authentic sharing of personal lived experiences, increased awareness of identity of self, and relationship to others, through in-depth reflection and sharing of their creative representation of theater. Student reflections took place on SRI in individual, small and large group discussions and reflections. Students created narrative representations expressed through movement and theater, reflecting each narrative Learning Story ("My Story" assignment). The "My Story" written assignment focused on diverse cultural background and student various self-identities. Students wrote narrative "My Story" on the SRI which were shared in small groups. On the final day on the SRI, individual students' shared their "My Story" with the large group expressed through improvisation, led by a international guest, representing the storyteller's self-identities. New Zealand Learning Stories and Playback theater expert, facilitated small group work with improvisation acting and led the final culminating large group My Stories improv theater.

The purpose of this project was to create opportunity for students to gain deeper understanding of self-identity through the experience of sharing narratives ("My Story") following the Learning Stories (storytelling) format. The SRI environment provided the optimal setting that fostered a safe and open space for students to share their narrative stories in a beautiful, pristine, topographically diverse location that helped build a learning community through interdisciplinary and cultural exchange.

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

The activity related to the ECS 463 "Creating and Supporting Reciprocal Family and Community Networks" course in several ways. The trip to the SRI met course student learning objective, as students were able to apply techniques and skills used in individual and group process facilitation, problem solving, decision-making, collaboration, communication and team-building in order to effectively work in partnership with families, professionals, and the community. It is critical educators understand their own cultural values and beliefs in order to support diverse children and families. The course objectives include acquiring a deeper understanding of the Learning Stories approach, analyze and compare Learning Stories, and observe and reflect upon student identities, living in a multi-cultural society. Also, the ECS 463 class has a unit which focuses on student self-identity. In ECS 460 and ECS 470 courses, student learn how to complete Learning Stories assessments on young children. In the ECS 463 course students continue their inquiry assessment practices with the Learning Stories approach, by writing Learning Stories as part of two interview assignments. In addition, students also develop a Learning Story about their own development, referred to as a "My Story". The ECS 463



students identify key aspects of their social and cultural identities that have influenced their development.

Similar to Learning Stories, students included a “What it Means” section which describes the significance of their identity and also an “Opportunities and Possibilities” section which included vision for their future. Lastly, students completed the “My Story” written assignment during the SRI trip which included supportive family and friends, written a response to the storyteller, after they read the student “My Story”. The “My Story” was very powerful and transformative experience for the students. Students reported that they felt that as a result of the “My Story” assignment they had a better understanding of their identities and are better prepared to support diverse children and families, connect with deeper with their own families and community.

(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

The strength of IRA activity was the incredible sense of community that was developed as a result of the SRI trip. The interdisciplinary collaboration between ECS and ART provided a powerful exchange between faculty and students. Some students had never spent a night away from their family, traveled by boat, or visited an island. In addition, some felt this trip was the first time they developed caring, supportive friendships, and experienced a true sense of community which they did not feel they had experienced at CI prior to this SRI trip. Some students shared they had taken classes with other students who also participated in the SRI trip but did not feel connected to each other on campus, until the experience of being together on the Island and sharing their My Stories. In addition, the sharing of the “My Story” through improvisation acting was very powerful for the students. Many students had never experienced theater and had a very positive experience. Students’ took risks to share their stories openly, honestly while being very transparent. This level of sharing could not have been recreated in a classroom at CI. The SRI trip provided an environment that fostered the students feeling of safety and the ability to share their personal stories, expressed collaboratively through improvisation acting.

Also, the ARTS faculty provided exceptional leadership in the area of self-care, movement exercises, yoga, team building activities, and demonstrated true collaboration with the ECS program. In addition, the Art faculty lead students in movement activities that represented aspects of their My Stories with respect, while honoring the varying skill and comfort levels of students. The exchange between programs was definitely a highlight of this IRA activity.

Lastly, the expert facilitation led by the international guest was incredible. The skill, knowledge, experience and exceptional facilitation by the international guest was a gift and strength of this project. The SRI trip and work with improvisation acting was so successful because of the phenomenal work led by the international facilitator.

(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY’S WEAKNESSES?

The only challenge of this IRA activity was the amount of planning or organizing the SRI trip, including working with international guest facilitator. Any interdisciplinary collaboration takes a lot of work to communication, plan, organize, implement and follow up. However, the benefits to the students make interdisciplinary collaborations across programs outweigh the additional work load.

(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

Next time, I would like to continue the research project with My Stories on the SRI and incorporate music and include additional ARTS faculty and students to further support interdisciplinary collaboration.

(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

I learned how much work it takes to plan a trip to the SRI! Also, how much additional work it takes to include international guest facilitator. However, all the extra work was extremely worth it!

We also learned to adjust activities based on student needs. Throughout the SRI trip, we reevaluated the schedule and adjusted to meet student needs. The high attunement and sensitivity of the ARTS faculty and international guest facilitator to the student needs was so helpful in meeting the students' needs.

(7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)

I created a survey to assess student experience and feedback about the SRI trip. See attached document.

8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.

IRA Activity approved budget: \$10,914.00

Actual Costs:

Island Packard- round trip boat transportation and SRI lodging= \$3,224.00

Food= \$718.10

SRI Research Station Lodging= \$1,395.00

International Guest Facilitator fee= \$4,000

Total spent= \$9,337.1

\$10,914.00 (IRA budget)

\$9,337.1 (Amount spent)

Total Remaining Funds = \$1,576.90

Note: over budget due to reduced number of students who attended the IRA funded Santa Rosa Island trip and savings on food costs.

B. ATTENDEE LIST- SUPPORTING DOCUMENT:

In addition to the report form, *in a separate document*, attach to your email a list of attendees complete with each student major and grade level. This for IRA Committee reference only and will not be published on the IRA website. Include your name and the title of your IRA activity on the document.

Please see attached Attendee list

C.IMAGES FROM ACTIVITY:

Finally, attach to your email up to 6 images demonstrating student participation (under 2 MB total) with captions/titles. Please attach these photos in .JPEG format directly to email. Thank you!

See attached photos





