Summer Program Report
Practical Academic Secondary Enrichment
Art and Imagination

Student:
Dates: June 24-July 4, 2013
Teacher:
Teaching Assistant:

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
All individuals learn best when they have the opportunity to practice and apply what they are learning in real life situations. Because students with visual impairments may be less able to pick up information and related concepts that sighted children see as they casually go through their day, they have an even greater need for real life learning experiences.

Students in the Practical Academic Summer Enrichment (PASE) program also benefit from learning and practicing skills in comfortable, enjoyable contexts that support their unique learning needs. Therefore, a primary goal of this program is to ensure that learning takes place within enjoyable activities.

Summer learning at TSBVI focuses on skills related to the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC): compensatory academic skills, orientation and mobility, career education, assistive technology, visual efficiency skills, independent living, recreation and leisure, social interaction, and self determination skills. Functional applications of these skill areas include activities such as practicing academic skills like math (making a budget) and literacy (writing a thank you letter), recreational and domestic activities (community outings including travel skills, physical activities, meal planning, cooking, grocery shopping);
communication (using appropriate language in various contexts, giving and following directions); planning, organizing, and sequencing. Specific activities provided for individual students are described below.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS: Art and Imagination
In this two-week program, students explored themes such as colors, shapes, texture, and aspects of nature while developing their fine motor skills and expanding their creativity. The young artists were exposed to unique and fun art mediums such as painting, lantern making, clay sculpting, jewelry making, batik, and silkscreening. Students were also able to taste different cuisines, such as Thai and Indian dishes.
Clay Ways Pottery
Students visited a local pottery workshop and gallery and had the opportunity to create a clay sculpture. The studio is a pottery teaching workshop and home to ten resident potters. Learning to mold and work the clay into shapes from their imaginations was a great way for them to be able to express themselves nonverbally. Creating pottery requires concentration, fine motor skills, patience, and attention to detail.

Women and Their Work Museum
Students visited a museum called Women and Their Work. It is a visual and performing arts organization that is committed to emphasizing the value and excellence of art by women and educating audiences of all ages and abilities about contemporary art. Students were given a tour of the current exhibition (“Falling Hive”) and participated in a hands-on activity that involved sewing.

Blue Moon Glassworks
Students learned how to create fused glass pendants. They were able to use different tools to help cut the glass, as well as choose different shards for their piece. Each shard was of a different color, texture, size, and shape, and students were able to use their imagination and creativity to organize them into beautiful designs.

Sunshine Community Gardens
The class took a walk to the nearby community garden. They explored various flowers, bushes, shrubs, and food plants. They were able to see vegetables on the vine, such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and eggplants, as well as kale, chard, lettuce, and spinach. They were also able to touch and smell many herbs such as rosemary, basil, and lavender, which they used later in class to create herbal essential oils.

Austin Screen Graphics
Students had the opportunity to visit a local screen printing shop and learn about the art and business of screen printing. They toured the workroom and were able to explore the different machines. They asked questions about the process and learned about the skills necessary to do that work as a career. They had the opportunity to use the screen printer and make a t-shirt to take home.

HEB
Students traveled to HEB (once using public transportation) to purchase groceries and supplies. Students helped plan the week’s breakfast and lunch meals. Prior to these trips, they participated in a discussion on how to make a grocery list, and how to handle problems or issues that might arise at the store, such as when they needed assistance to locate an item.

Restaurant Outings
Students traveled to two different "sit-down" restaurants in the Austin area. Students learned and practiced social skills and self-advocacy skills, including choosing and ordering food from a wide variety of choices, budgeting and paying for a meal, using utensils and practicing table manners, and using appropriate conversation skills during mealtimes.
SPECIFIC EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM AREAS ADDRESSED

Recreation and Leisure
Recreation and leisure skills are a very important part of teenagers’ and adults’ lives and often occupy a large percentage of time. Students participated in many recreation and leisure activities in the classroom as well as in the community to gain knowledge of activities they may want to pursue in the future. These activities were incorporated into the program to teach skills such as independent recreation and leisure, social leisure skills, taking turns, conversing with peers, and helping others.

Literacy
Each student kept a personal journal/scrapbook of her summer experience at TSBVI. The journals were created in the student’s personal literacy medium (e.g., Braille, large print, pictures). Weekly grocery shopping lists were created by each student, and used within our shopping program. The students used labels in the dorm to know where to store items after shopping.

Math
Each student paid for grocery items we purchased, using the concept of "a dollar more" system. Using this method, students are taught that whenever the cost of an item contains a certain number of dollars and a certain number of cents, they should pay the next higher dollar and receive the change (e.g., if the cost is $5.75, pay $6.00). This is a good method to use for students who have difficulty understanding how to pay the cents to the right of the decimal point. Money folding techniques and money identification were explored.

Social Skills/Self-Advocacy
Social skills were infused into every aspect of this unit. Skills such as proper greetings, interactions with strangers, requesting assistance, waiting, turn taking, and how to conduct oneself in a variety of public places were discussed and practiced. Students also worked on sharing their ideas and giving input, which helped them increase their self esteem and self determination skills.

Independent Living Skills
The students worked on greater independence in all aspects of their daily routines. Before grocery shopping and planning their meals, we discussed healthy food choices and the importance of incorporating the five basic food groups. The students then helped plan meals, and used social skills to agree as a group. Each student created a shopping list and navigated the grocery store to find her items. During the cooking programs, students prepared their own breakfasts each morning, as well as helping prepare stovetop items during lunch throughout the week. Everyone practiced different skills throughout the program, such as using appliances, measuring, pouring, mixing, spreading, opening containers, and using proper table manners. The students learned and used social skills throughout these activities, such as taking turns, requesting help, and making judgments and decisions.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

OTHER CLASSES, GROUPS, AND SERVICES

Yoga
Students with visual impairments often have difficulty finding recreation and leisure activities that they enjoy and in which they can participate. This Yoga class incorporated both exercise and relaxation techniques to relieve stress, release excess energy, and ultimately improve
mental focus and physical health. Relaxation techniques help individuals bring some balance into their busy lives and assert some control while releasing stress. Yoga is a fun activity that is highly accessible and available to all people because all it requires is a mat, knowledge of a few physical movements (postures), and knowing how to breathe deeply. Participating in these postures helps students become more aware of their body and how it moves through space. This can be both challenging and rewarding for students, whether visually impaired or not. Yoga is an amazing way to develop strength, flexibility, better posture, knowledge of how to safely move through space, and self-confidence.

This summer, we explored a variety of yoga techniques in order to introduce ways that yoga can be used for both exercise and relaxation. These techniques included guided deep breathing, movement paired with music, held postures for stretching and flexibility, and guided relaxation techniques. Yoga concepts that were covered included the importance of good posture, balance, body awareness in space, and communication. The students were encouraged to do the positions slowly and gently and always listen to their body and not stretch too far. The class started with deep, slow breathing paired with warm-up activities that encouraged good posture while stretching, and slowly moving their body through postures. By the end of the program the students were encouraged to choose a posture and teach it to their classmates. This activity focused on communication, assertiveness, memory, self-determination, and ultimately leadership.

Skills infused from the Expanded Core Curriculum included:

- Sensory Efficiency Skills
- Orientation & Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Self-Determination
- Compensatory Skills
- Independent Living Skills

Music
During the PASE music class, students were given many opportunities to explore the world of music. Class activities incorporated instrument exploration, singing, movement, listening, music appreciation, making choices, and creating music and dance with a group. Instruments explored during several different activities included drums, percussion instruments, and microphone beat boxing. Several audio recordings were also made.

In addition to exploring a variety of musical instruments and techniques, students were able to perform on a small classroom stage, using a microphone while singing along to familiar songs, and creating unique songs. Movement activities included dancing with a partner, solo dancing, interpretive movement, and movement/dancing with a parachute, hoops and juggling props. Students chose a variety of songs and listened to many new genres of music during the music appreciation and choice-making activities.