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Collaborative Learning of Social Justice: Digital Performance Collaboration between Graduate, Undergraduate, and High School Students

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This collaborative learning project embraces challenging themes of social justice. It brought together high school students and university graduate and undergraduate students, as well as high school faculty and university faculty, resulting in an extensive research component and a choreography and film presented together through the final digital performance—Performance of Social Justice. Over the course of one semester, the graduate students enrolled in the Social Justice Issues in Education course conducted research on marginalized populations including LGBT group, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low socioeconomic status, immigrants, and rural communities. Their research and reflections were shared with the undergraduate students, who then created films to showcase the reflections. The high school dancers then created a dance component, using the social justice concepts portrayed in the films. The project brought themes of social justice into the minds and hearts of the participants and transferred their recognition and investigation into dialogues and a creative product that culminated in a live performance for a broader audience. The research questions guiding this project are these: How can the collaborative learning in creating a digital performance engage participating students in learning about social justice issues? How can creating a digital performance enable students to take actions toward the social justice issues? This collaboration showed how the high school and university collaboration could provide each other with pedagogical support. The presentation will discuss the project process, challenges, findings, and the final digital performance.