Edison After School Music Program: A Field Experience Volunteering With Inner City Youth in Dayton Public Schools
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About the Program:
• Serves 10-15 students ages 4th-8th grade, mainly draws students from Edison Elementary (99.9% of the students who attend Edison are considered “economically disadvantaged”)
• Offers free instruction in band instruments, guitar, piano, and choir by UD student volunteers
• Meets once a week for 1 ½ hours
• Established in Fall 2010 by the efforts of the Dayton Optimist Club, Dayton Urban League, and Dayton Public Schools
• UD students design the curriculum and teach the lessons

Challenges:
Musical
• Students unable to bring home the school-owned instruments
• Poorly functioning instruments
• Motivating students to practice
• Retention of music learned

Logistical
• Consistent attendance
• Retention from year one to year two
• Recruiting consistent volunteers from UD
• Limited funding

Steps taken to improve the program (2 year time span):
1. Identified the need for instruments to be taken home, and for more student volunteer teachers
2. Applied for the “Learn Lead Serve” grant and received $2,500 to acquire quality instruments
3. Designed a more structured curriculum
4. Recruited music education students as well as other students affiliated with the music department to serve as teachers
5. Met weekly with volunteers to discuss plans and goals for the upcoming week’s lesson

Addressing challenges:
Musical
• The “Learn Lead Serve” grant solved our problem of insufficient instruments and enabled students to rent proper instruments from the school for a small fee
• Continue to work on student practice accountability

Logistical
• Give the students something to look forward to the next week to improve consistent attendance
• Enable volunteer work to partially count for UD teacher education observation hour requirements
• Continue to apply for grants and be resourceful with the limited funding

Sample Rehearsal:
6:00-6:35 choral instruction
6:35-7:15 individual/small group instrumental instruction
7:15-7:30 individual/small group performance