LabZone engages community schools

DENISE CHANG
CONTRIBUTOR

San Diego State's Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Education and Lemon Grove Academy of Sciences and Humanities have partnered for the third consecutive year through LabZone, a service learning outreach initiative designed for future educators who interact with underserved youth from local schools.

SDSU students enrolled in Science 230, the three-unit LabZone course, will design activities and games each week before bringing them to middle school students. Activities, including indoor and outdoor games give the students an experiential hands-on experience as opposed to formal classroom methods. Students use everyday activities to demonstrate the importance of mathematics and science.

Preferences of educational psychology and faculty member of CRIME, Alexander Chribis, states that this year’s LabZone students have responded positively to their assignments. LabZone students are paired with the Lemon Grove Academy of Sciences and Humanities Principal Rick Oser, who said the relationship between SDSU and Lemon Grove students goes beyond the academics. "The future of the students here at Lemon Grove are not clearly defined," Oser said. "In addition to the authentic learning opportunities, our students have developed relationships with the SDSU students who often serve as mentors, guides and champions for academic success during middle school and beyond."

Oser added that LabZone is a win-win situation in which SDSU students gain valuable experience and exposure while the Lemon Grove Academy students are mentored by SDSU students. This fall, LabZone takes place on Wednesdays from 3-5:30 p.m. and Fridays from 2-4:30 p.m. at Lemon Grove Academy's first field session starting in September. SDSU students also meet in classes two Mondays from 2-3:30 p.m.

This Wednesday, SDSU students will be able to see the programs they have created for the first time. Science 230 is offered to all majors for the first time this semester, fulfilling the social and behavioral science general education requirement. The class also meets the Early Field Experience requirement for the SDSU teacher credential program. It will also be available for spring semesters.

LabZone is a collaborative effort between CRIME, the SDSU Colleges of Science and Education, the Lemon Grove School District, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, and the Thomas C. Ackerman Foundation.