

Executive Summary

National Dance Institute's In-School Education Programs Evaluation



During the 2002-2003 school year an external evaluation of our in-school program was conducted by **Dr. Rob Horowitz, Associate Director of the Center for Arts Education Research at Teacher's College, Columbia University**. The evaluation focused on the impact of the program on our partner schools, on student learning and classroom teachers, and elicited feedback from our constituents on effective NDI teaching practice and program implementation. The final report on this year-long evaluation, which combined onsite class observations throughout the year, interviews with school and NDI personnel, and surveys distributed to all our partner schools, has been issued. Please read the Executive Summary of the report included below.

Executive Summary

Impact on Schools:

- The decision to present end of the year performances within each participating school helped develop a sense of community and identity. The performances brought parents into the schools, and allowed children to perform for their peers, parents and teachers.
- NDI classes helped build a sense of community that, in the best examples, transcended the classes and affected the whole school. 91% of in-school coordinators and 62% of schoolteachers reported that the NDI program improved school climate.
- 83% of in-school coordinators and 56% of teachers reported that the program increased parent involvement.

Impact on Student Learning:

- The NDI in-school program is highly effective in teaching sequential dance skills. These skills encompass many of the national standards in dance education, as well as New York State standards. NDI will successfully address the knowledge and competencies required in a new NYC dance curriculum.
- Because students studied dance with highly-skilled teachers throughout the entire school year, they were able to build specific skills in movement, dance, stagecraft, and performance.
- The NDI instructors emphasized skills inherent to a successful performance from the beginning of each school year. Children learned to make eye contact with an audience, project enthusiasm, and work together with the other dancers.
- 100% of schoolteachers reported that students learned to move to a musical beat and perform complex dance sequences.
- 94% of teachers reported that students learned new dance vocabulary.
- 94% of teachers reported that students learned to demonstrate group dance skills, such as mirroring, copying, leading and following.
- 88% of teachers reported that students learned to observe and describe elements of a dance sequence.
- NDI engaged students in higher order thinking skills tied to cognitive, affective and kinesthetic domains of learning. Students learned complex dance patterns and sequences, and then learned to re-arrange or reverse the patterns. Students learned that they needed to be fully engaged, physically and cognitively, in order to participate effectively in class.

- 88% of teachers reported that the program helped students work creatively.
- Children gained self-confidence as they found they could achieve or perform new and challenging tasks. 91% of teachers reported that students gained self-confidence.
- Students learned to stay focused during classes. They demonstrated an ability to concentrate on accomplishing difficult tasks. 88% of teachers reported that students demonstrated concentration and focus. 91% of teachers reported that students demonstrated self-discipline and perseverance in NDI classes.
- Students needed to learn how to work as a team in order to master the dance routines and prepare for performances. The NDI classes established an expectation of responsibility for individual actions in the service of a group endeavor. 79% of teachers reported that that program supported cooperative learning skills.

Impact on School Teachers:

- The program provided schoolteachers with the opportunity to see aspects of their children that would otherwise not be apparent. They gained a different perspective on their students' abilities, achievement, character and personality.
- NDI provided opportunities for teachers to gain understanding of dance content, pedagogy and performance. 76% of teachers reported that they learned more about dance.
- 57% of teachers reported that they made regular connections to dance in their classrooms.
- Some schoolteachers learned new classroom management techniques or pedagogical skills from observing NDI classes. 45% of schoolteachers reported that they learned new teaching skills from the NDI teachers.

Program Implementation:

- NDI is highly effective in managing the in-school program. The NDI administrative staff was very supportive of the efforts of the NDI teachers and attempted to accommodate the needs of the schools and schoolteachers. NDI may need to expand its administrative staff in order to continue to effectively collaborate with schools and coordinate efforts with NYC Department of Education initiatives. NDI will also need to develop additional documentation on the program, the NDI curriculum and effective NDI pedagogical practice in order to work effectively with the new NYC administrative structure and initiatives.
- 100% of in-school coordinators reported that NDI was responsive to school needs and concerns.
- 100% of in-school coordinators reported that NDI had clear expectations of the schools' commitments to adequate scheduling, space and teacher participation.
- 91% of in-school coordinators reported that NDI was helpful and responsive when working out teaching schedules.
- 100% of in-school coordinators and schoolteachers reported that NDI was a well-organized and effective partner for their schools.
- 100% of in-school coordinators and 97% of classroom teachers would recommend the program to other NYC schools.
- 92% of in-school coordinators reported that teachers strongly supported the NDI program.
- Schools described difficulties in setting up their own schedules for NDI classes. Because of gym schedules, testing, and other functions, coordinators needed to devote time and effort to provide an appropriate setting for NDI instruction. They expressed appreciation for the flexibility of NDI teachers and the NDI staff's acknowledgement of the schools' difficulties in this area and attempts to help.
- NDI teachers are highly-skilled and dedicated professionals with advanced expertise in dance and dance instruction. 94% of schoolteachers and 100% of in-school coordinators reported that NDI teachers were well-organized and prepared. 97% of classroom teachers reported that NDI teachers were effective at teaching dance to their students. 88% of classroom teachers reported that NDI teachers were effective in engaging students. 94% of classroom teachers reported that the NDI teachers' instruction was appropriate for their grade level.