

Program Evaluation: Dancing Classrooms

Dr. Rob Horowitz
Evaluator

Dr. Elizabeth Beaubrun
Nick Brust
Dr. Lindsay Weiss
Research Associates

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
Exploratory Study: Year One	8
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.....	11
Dance Learning: Kinesthetic and Cognitive Development	12
Social-Emotional Learning	19
IMPLEMENTATION	29
Teaching Artists and the Dulaine Method.....	29
Classroom Teachers and Dance Instruction	33
Collaboration with Schools.....	37
OVERALL ANALYSIS.....	41
Overall Ratings – Researcher Observations and Teacher Surveys	41
Predictors of Student Development.....	43
Comparative Analysis	48
CONCLUSION.....	52
APPENDIX.....	54
Observation Protocol.....	54
Dancing Classrooms Study Variables Draft.....	57

Dancing Classrooms Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

In fall 2013 we began a two-year study of the Dancing Classrooms program in New York City. Our objectives were to:

- understand the program's potential impact on students and classrooms
- identify the characteristics of the program that can lead to successful outcomes
- identify the external and programmatic conditions that are most supportive of program success
- Develop assessment and evaluation instruments that can be used by Dancing Classrooms or other researchers to track program implementation and outcomes.

We used a mixed-method design, combining statistical and qualitative approaches. Data collection over the 2 years included classroom observations (n = 192), teacher surveys (n = 217), school principal surveys (n = 87) and interviews (n = 25). Analysis methods included content analysis of qualitative data and descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear regression.

Implementation

Our analysis indicates that Dancing Classrooms is an effective organization that provides high-quality dance instruction to New York City's students. The program is well-organized and implemented, with excellent teaching artists and a system of liaisons and administrative staff providing support for logistics and programming.

We found that the program successfully adhered to the six teaching principles of the Dulaine Method. Our observation data on Dancing Classrooms' instruction was consistent, as we documented evidence of the instructional method across all of our observations.

- Teaching artists consistently applied the principles of the Dulaine Method, including demonstrating respect and compassion in the classroom, creating a safe place and positive tone, and maintaining command and control of the learning environment. Their instruction optimized the use of verbal and body language and effectively controlled the flow of the lesson, with a consistent lesson structure and protocol from week to week.
- Teaching artists encouraged students to maintain self-respect and respect for others. The artists modeled the respectful behavior they expected from the students.
- Teaching artists cultivated a supportive and low-risk environment where students were free to try something new and make mistakes along the way. Teaching artists intentionally encouraged the idea that all participants – adults and students – were learning together as equals. They

tactfully discouraged negative behavior such as teasing, bullying or inappropriately criticizing fellow dancers. They clarified social boundaries and ensured that the experience was inclusive.

- Teaching artists effectively managed lessons from start to finish, projecting “presence.” The teaching artists strategically kept the students focused and on task through attention to routine and protocol. Students knew what was expected and behaved accordingly.
- Teaching artists continuously used positive reinforcement and encouragement in words, tone and body language. They effectively used physical and verbal communication to reinforce instruction.
- Teaching artists set the tone of their residencies by projecting genuine joy, energy, humor and elegance in their instruction.
- Lessons were well-paced with consistent protocols. Students were constantly moving, switching partners or getting set up for the next move. The teaching artists were highly skilled in keeping the group lessons on track while still giving students individual attention, as needed.
- Most teachers enthusiastically supported the Dancing Classroom program. Teachers generally respected the teaching artists’ lead role and approach to behavior management and instruction. The teachers often supported the teaching artists, by helping students with steps, applying the Dancing Classroom vocabulary and referring to the performance criteria. The teachers’ support was most effective when they participated in the classes.
- During our observations, most teachers participated alongside students and played an active role in the lessons. They were supportive of the teaching artists’ instructional approach and often adapted them as their own. We observed classroom teachers helping students with specific steps, posture, frames and affect.
- When asked to describe what was most valuable about collaborating with Dancing Classrooms, school teachers most often cited the benefits for their students, including their growth in confidence, maturity and social skills. They also valued the spirit of inclusion fostered by the program and the opportunity to learn an art form that they enjoyed.
- When asked how Dancing Classrooms supported their schools' instructional goals, school administrators cited educational benefits for students, alignment with academic standards and students’ social-emotional development.
- When asked to describe the most challenging aspect of the collaboration, teachers most often cited scheduling conflicts, the reticence of some of their students, insufficient dance space, and the need to cede some instructional control to the teaching artist.
- When asked to describe the most challenging aspect of the collaboration, school administrators most often cited scheduling, space and funding.

Student Development

Dancing Classrooms has a pronounced effect on student development in dance skills, kinesthetic and cognitive development, and social-emotional learning.

Dance Learning: Kinesthetic and Cognitive Development

- Students demonstrated improvement in the qualities of movement and grace through dance.
- Students developed skills in responding to rhythm and tempo.
- Students developed skills in physical coordination and balance.
- Students developed skills in learning, recalling and applying choreography, patterns and sequences.
- Students developed their ability to apply observation skills, problem solving, self-assessment and feedback.
- Students' dance skills noticeably improved over the course of the residencies, particularly in the areas of movement quality, musicality, and reflecting the qualities of each unique style of dance.

Social-Emotional Learning

- Students strengthened their collaborative skills by working with their dancing partners and the overall classroom ensemble.
- The students visibly projected self-confidence in their movements, language and social interactions as they gained mastery of each ballroom dance.
- Students developed social confidence.
- Dancing Classrooms instruction inherently expected students to be engaged, apply self-discipline and positively interact with one another. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for controlling their behavior. They learned to focus and stay on task.
- Students demonstrated engagement and motivation.
- Students exuded a sense of joy and fun during the lessons. They showed enthusiasm, a desire to excel, and curiosity about learning the material. The rapid pace of the lessons and the challenging content engaged students and motivated them to stay on task.

These areas of social-emotional learning closely overlap with CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies, such as social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making.

Program Effects

Through regression analysis we identified the most salient predictors, among program characteristics, of impact on student development. We also compared student growth from the beginning to the end of a term, and compared effects in schools with predicted high and low implementation.

Results indicate that successful implementation of dimensions of the Dulaine Method, combined with effective collaboration between Dancing Classrooms and schools, predicted improvement in students' social-emotional learning, as well as dance skills.

Effects on students are stronger when there was committed collaboration by schools and when the classroom teacher actively participated in instruction. However, the effects of the program were still pronounced when these conditions are not present.

- Teaching artists confidently projected authority with respect and compassion, enabling students to take risks and develop their kinesthetic abilities. The sequencing of lessons helped students develop skills sequentially, through reasonable, scaffolded steps.
- The structure and pacing of the classes, combined with the authoritative command and control of the teaching artists, supported students' development of cognitive skills related to dance instruction, such as observation skills, understanding patterning and sequencing, and problem solving.
- Through combined analysis of all data, we found an effect on students' development of social skills. Flow and consistency of well-sequenced lessons – and the respect and compassion projected by the teaching artists – supported students' social development. Students developed new, mature, relationships with their peers that were reflected in their performance and behavior.
- Through analysis of all data, we found an effect on students' development of emotional skills, with indications of profound growth in many students' perceptions of self. Students developed self-discipline, were engaged and motivated to participate, developed a sense of mastery, and the ability to focus and stay on task. Our observations were consistent with the regression analysis. We concluded that these effects were due to the respectful and compassionate authority of the teaching artists and the well-sequenced instructional method.

We identified five high-implementation school sites and five low-implementation school sites for repeated observations. School sites were defined as *high-implementation* if the program was supported and implemented in an exemplary manner, through collaborative logistical planning, provision of adequate space, and strong commitment by teachers and administrators. Schools were designated as *low-implementation* if there were indications of inadequate collaboration and school support, and difficulty in scheduling and logistics.

- Schools with low implementation had lower ratings across all student outcomes, most significantly in the areas of social and emotional development. In contrast, schools with high

implementation had scores above 85% in all categories, most significantly in kinesthetic and social development. However, across all schools the Dancing Classrooms program was shown to favorably impact student outcomes.

- Student development ratings were significantly higher in the high-implementation school sites ($p < .05$), indicating stronger effects when the program is well implemented.

The differences were more pronounced when comparing classes in high-implementation school sites that also had exemplary and experienced teaching artists vs. classes in low-implementation school sites taught by less experienced or developing teaching artists. This analysis revealed a sharper contrast between the high and low school sites. Schools with high implementation *and* experienced teaching artists showed ratings above 91% for all student outcomes, with the strongest effects in social development (94.7%). Low-implementation *and* low-TA school sites still showed positive effects on student development, although somewhat weaker.

We can conclude from these last two analyses that the program is effective across varied teaching and school conditions, but that these effects are significantly enhanced with strong school collaboration, and even more so with addition of experienced and exemplary instructors.

National Implications

The structure of the Dulaine Method, coupled with strong collaboration from teachers, was shown to have positive effects on students' kinesthetic skills and social-emotional development. Although our principal data collection was in New York City, an analysis of interviews from Dancing Classrooms programs Los Angeles and Washington State showed a consistency of program application and effects on students. The implementation of the program was remarkably similar to New York, with some variation according to local needs and resources. Most significant, the programs' teaching artists used the same pedagogy, with adherence to the Dulaine Method, and teachers and principals reported similar effects on their students.

This indicates that the findings in our New York study can apply to other locales, as well. If the program is successfully implemented as intended, then local programs should experience a similar effect on students' of kinesthetic and social-emotional learning.

It would be valuable to test this through a national study, comparing adherence to the Dulaine Method and successful program implementation with student outcomes. A national study could further identify potential effects on SEL, while also highlighting variations in implementation that may enhance or impede positive effects, such as school collaboration, resources and teacher participation.

The data collection tools developed through this study can be used by Dancing Classrooms sites for local assessment, quality management and professional development. The program and student variables studied here can also be applied to research studies focused on other areas, such as the impact on special education or English language learners, other age groups, and different educational settings.

Dancing Classrooms Program Evaluation

Introduction

During the 2013-2014 school year we began a two-year study of the Dancing Classrooms program in New York City. Our objectives were to understand the program's potential impact on students and classrooms, the characteristics of the program that can lead to successful outcomes, and the external and programmatic conditions that are most supportive of program success. We also developed assessment and evaluation instruments that can be used by Dancing Classrooms or other researchers to track program implementation and outcomes.

The Dancing Classrooms program emphasizes essential life skills taught through the practice of ballroom dance. Instruction is provided by teaching artists over a 10-week term, with 2 sessions per week. There were 3 terms (Fall, Winter and Spring) during the 2014-2015 school year. Residencies included a video lesson, visit from a guest artist and a student showcase. Partner schools also had the option of selecting 6 boys and 6 girls to compete in the Colors of the Rainbow team match with students from throughout New York City.

Students were primarily from 5th grade. The instruction was guided by the Dulaine Method, which emphasizes these components: Respect and Compassion, Being Present, Creating a Safe Place, Command and Control, Language – Body and Verbal, and Humor and Joy.

Descriptive data from our first year's study were used to develop an observational assessment strategy for rating: (1) program implementation, (2) teaching characteristics and (3) indicators of student learning. Each observation in our final round yielded a rich source of statistical and qualitative data coded according to: 9 student dance, kinesthetic and cognitive skills; 5 skills related to students' social and emotional development; the 6 teaching characteristics of the Dulaine Method; and 3 teaching and school conditions. The assessment process was revised for the second year of the study based upon our first year findings and discussions with Dancing Classrooms staff.

This report contains a summary of methods and findings from the first year of our program evaluation of Dancing Classrooms, and presents statistical and qualitative data from the second year of the study. Data collection over the 2 years included classroom observations (n = 192), teacher surveys (n = 217), school principal surveys (n = 87) and interviews (n = 25). Analysis methods included content analysis of qualitative data and descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear regression. Principal methods of data collection during the second year of the study included classroom observation (n = 86,

conducted by 4 researchers), teacher surveys (n = 116), school administrator surveys (n = 28), and interviews with teachers, principals and students (n = 19).¹

Our recommended observation assessment criteria provide the structure for this report.² There are several excerpts from our qualitative observation data in this report. They provide an authentic description of the program in action and our evaluation team's response to the program's instruction and its effect on students.³ Additional quotes and descriptions can be found in our first year interim report.

Exploratory Study: Year One

To accomplish the overall objectives of the study, we began our study with several inter-related tasks:

- To identify and define the potential positive outcomes of the Dancing Classrooms program
- To identify and define the characteristics of the Dancing Classroom instructional method and program support that could potentially lead to the positive outcomes
- To identify and define programmatic and structural challenges to successful implementation
- To develop assessment instrumentation to track student outcomes and program implementation
- To develop a research design that could identify potential causal connections between program implementation and student outcomes

We had resources available to help us understand the teaching characteristics and learning indicators. Dancing Classrooms materials described the components of the Dulaine Method of instruction. As researchers, we had our own model of potential impact from years of study in the field, within cognitive, social and personal domains, as well as dance skills.⁴

Our approach was to organize these models of implementation and impact, while at the same time asking field researchers to suspend their preconceptions – as much as possible – and observe the classroom instruction, writing rich description of the settings, pedagogy and student behaviors. We then coded the site visit reports, sorting relevant text according to emerging categories that fit our evolving model. Then we combined the observation categories with the Dancing Classrooms materials,

¹Interviews were conducted by phone in New York City and onsite in Los Angeles and Washington State. This report focuses on Dancing Classrooms in New York City. However, quotes from the west coast interviews are included in this report due to the consistency of implementation and outcomes.

² The observation criteria can be viewed in the Appendix

³ Observers included Dr. Elizabeth Beaubrun, Nick Brust, Dr. Rob Horowitz and Dr. Lindsay Weiss.

⁴ Burton, J., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (1999). Learning in and through the arts: Transfer and higher order thinking. In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (35-46). Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Burton, J., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (2000). Learning in and through the arts: The question of transfer. *Studies in Art Education*, 41(3), 228-257.

particularly the concepts in the Dulaine Method, and adjusted them according to our own research models. We added new categories reflecting district, school and partnership issues.

Through this process we developed an overall draft outline of variables and categories reflecting: (1) implementation and partnership issues, (2) student learning, (3) school change, and (4) instruction. The outline became the basis for developing a research design, assessment instrumentation, and data collection methods. We referred to it throughout the two-year process, getting input from Dancing Classrooms and comparing it with our emerging data. A shorter version became the basis for systematic coding of our qualitative data. A much shorter version took form during our final data analysis and writing process in fall 2015 and formed the basis for analysis of our second year of data and the chapter structure for this report.⁵

Data Collection: Spring 2014

Using our outline as a guide, we developed interview protocols, surveys for teachers and administrators, and an observation method that could gather systematic quantitative and qualitative data. The observations were conducted by our team of researchers, who would submit data online after each site visit. Researchers documented student and teaching artist behaviors, and then submitted estimates of the percent of students who demonstrated achievement in 8 areas of dance skills and 7 areas related to students' social-emotional development. The researchers also noted the degree to which the teaching artists adhered to the principles of the Dulaine Method, and whether the classroom, teacher and school settings provided adequate support for exemplary instruction.⁶

Our 5 researchers observed 104 classes during the 2014-2015 school year, with 35 exploratory observations and 69 observations using the structured method described above. We also surveyed teachers (n = 101) and school administrators (n = 59). We triangulated the data, looking for common or contradicting data from different sources.

Our Year One analysis showed that the data were consistent across schools, researchers, and data collection methods. We found that the program successfully adhered to the six teaching principles of the Dulaine Method. Our observation data on Dancing Classrooms' instruction was consistent, as we documented evidence of the instructional method across all of our observations. We also noted that many of the characteristics of the Dulaine Method are consistent with the expectations of good teaching practice for any school subject. We concluded that Dancing Classrooms is an effective organization that provides high quality dance instruction to New York City's students. The program was well-organized and implemented, with excellent teaching artists and a system of liaisons and administrative staff providing support for logistics and programming.

⁵ The initial draft outline can be viewed in the Appendix.

⁶ The development of our observational assessment method is described in: Horowitz, R. (2008) What You See is What You Get: Development of an Observational Strategy. Kennedy Center: VSA Arts.

Through comparing our observation and survey data we concluded that Dancing Classrooms supported student development of social and collaborative skills, as well as emotional and affective skills. Students learned to work together in a different setting than their typical school settings. The program clearly developed students' dance and expressive skills, as well as an understanding of ballroom dancing history and culture. Teachers spoke of students developing "self-discipline," "a sense of pride" and "a willingness to try something new." One teacher wrote, "Throughout my seven years working with this program it doesn't fail to amaze how much growth my students learn in ten weeks. They begin as kids and finish as ladies and gentlemen. The joy that this program brings to my kids is immeasurable. This program brings an experience to my students that they otherwise would not get the chance to experience."

As we began the study's second year, we revised the assessment instrumentation and conducted structured observations over the course of the winter and spring terms, surveyed principals and teachers, and interviewed teachers, administrators and students. The remainder of this report contains our Year Two data, overall findings and conclusions.

Student Development

Dancing Classrooms has a pronounced effect on student development in dance skills, kinesthetic and cognitive development, and social-emotional learning,

Program Impact on Students' Dance Learning: Kinesthetic and Cognitive Development

- Students demonstrated improvement in the qualities of movement and grace through dance
- Students developed skills in responding to rhythm and tempo
- Students developed skills in physical coordination and balance
- Students developed skills in learning, recalling and applying choreography, patterns and sequences
- Students developed their ability to apply observation skills, problem solving, self-assessment and feedback

Social-Emotional Learning

- Students acquired and applied cooperative and collaborative skills
- Students developed social confidence
- Students developed self-discipline, focus and task-persistence
- Students demonstrated increased engagement and motivation⁷

Students developed dance and performance skills while learning the mechanics and aesthetics of specific ballroom dances. The students continually refined the quality of their movements as they gained fluency and confidence. They learned to respond to the rhythm and tempo of different musical styles. They also learned to respond to cues and express the mood and style of each particular dance. Through classroom discussions, video presentations, and written assignments, the students developed an appreciation for ballroom dancing and learned the vocabulary and history of the art form. The lessons provided opportunities for students to hone their skills in observing, recalling and applying details of movements and sequences.

Dancing Classrooms supported social-emotional learning, as well as cognitive and kinesthetic development related to dance skills. The Dancing Classrooms approach cultivated positive behavioral skills that ensured an effective learning experience, particularly affecting self-discipline, focus, engagement, a sense of ownership of learning, and collaborative skills. Students were continually given opportunities to be stretched outside of their immediate comfort zone in a safe and supportive manner.

⁷ These areas of social-emotional learning closely overlap with CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies, such as social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making.

Dance Learning: Kinesthetic and Cognitive Development

Dancing Classrooms successfully supports development of students' dance and expressive skills.

Students learned and applied specific dance skills, choreography and aesthetic qualities of ballroom dances.

During site visits, our researchers observed that at least:

- 90% of students demonstrated improvement in coordination and balance
- 95% of students demonstrated acquisition and understanding of dance vocabulary
- 88% of students successfully responded to rhythm and tempo, incorporating musicality and physical expression

Collaborating classroom teachers reported that their students developed dance skills, demonstrated an understanding of dance vocabulary, and developed physical coordination and confidence through Dancing Classrooms.

Our research team assessed students' acquisition of dance skills through structured classroom observations. The following table shows the percentage of students who demonstrated achievement in each area.⁸ At least 66% of the students demonstrated achievement in each assessed area of dance skills.⁹

DANCE SKILLS – RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS	MEAN	SD
Demonstrates quality of movement and grace	65.6%	32.2%
Responds to rhythm and tempo	88.3%	17.3%
Demonstrates physical coordination, balance and confidence	89.6%	16.6%
Demonstrates understanding of dance vocabulary	95.4%	11.3%
Applies Feedback	82.4%	21.0%

⁸ These percentages are mean, or average, ratings across all researcher observations. Additional information on the observation system and criteria is in the Appendix.

⁹ The standard deviations (SD) indicate the dispersion of the ratings from the mean. A lower SD indicates more agreement among raters, across all observations.

Teachers reported that students gained dance skills, an understanding of dance vocabulary, learned and recalled choreography, developed physical coordination and confidence, and responded positively to feedback through participating in Dancing Classrooms.

DANCE SKILLS – TEACHER SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
My students developed an understanding of ballroom dance history through Dancing Classrooms	52.6%	34.2%	7.9%	5.3%	0%
My students demonstrated an understanding of dance vocabulary through participating in Dancing Classrooms	56%	38.8%	1.7%	2.6%	0.9%
My students learned and recalled choreography through Dancing Classrooms	68.1%	30.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0%
My students developed physical coordination and confidence through Dancing Classrooms	57%	36%	4.4%	1.8%	0.9%
My students developed their ability to respond to rhythm and tempo through Dancing Classrooms	50.4%	44.3%	2.6%	1.7%	0.9%
My students responded positively to, and applied feedback, from the dance teacher	61.2%	32.8%	2.6%	3.4%	0%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 87% of teachers reported that their students developed an understanding of ballroom dance history through Dancing Classrooms
- 95% of teachers reported that their students demonstrated an understanding of dance vocabulary through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 98% of teachers reported that their students learned and recalled choreography through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 93% of teachers reported that their students developed physical coordination and confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 95% of teachers reported that their students developed their ability to respond to rhythm and tempo through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 94% of teachers reported that their students applied feedback from the dance teacher

Another way to consider the teacher survey data is to examine mean scores for each survey item. Because we used a 5-point rating scale (“strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”), mean scores can range from 1 to 5. The following table shows high ratings (over 4.3) for each survey item about dance skills.

DANCE SKILLS – TEACHER SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
My students developed an understanding of ballroom dance history through Dancing Classrooms	4.34	0.84
My students demonstrated an understanding of dance vocabulary through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.47	0.74
My students learned and recalled choreography through Dancing Classrooms	4.66	0.55
My students developed physical coordination and confidence through Dancing Classrooms	4.46	0.74
My students developed their ability to respond to rhythm and tempo through Dancing Classrooms	4.42	0.71
My students responded positively to, and applied feedback, from the dance teacher	4.52	0.72

Throughout our study, responses from teacher surveys tended to be somewhat higher than the ratings in our researcher observations. This was likely due to two factors: (1) Some indicators are difficult to observe. This was particularly true of meta-cognitive skills, such as *problem solving*, or social-emotional capacities, such as *focus* or *engagement*. As in other projects, we generally found it easier to document acquisition of specific dance skills than more abstract capacities in cognitive, social and personal domains. To enhance the reliability of observer ratings we asked researchers to document the specific behaviors that influenced their ratings and discuss them with the principal investigator and the other researchers. (2) We also noted that some Dancing Classrooms lessons did not provide an opportunity to observe each indicator. For instance, every lesson we observed would highlight the students’ achievement in *responding to rhythm and tempo*, but perhaps wouldn’t include opportunities to observe *problem solving*.

An underlying premise of our research is that dance is more than a collection of structured physical behaviors set to genre, rhythm and tempo. Dance simultaneously engages the cognitive, affective and kinesthetic domains, all in the service of creative expression, while providing a means for understanding oneself and one’s relation to others. Put more simply, it is obvious to anyone observing the dance classes that there is serious thinking going on, as students learn and implement steps, sequence and overall choreography, in collaboration with their partners and the rest of the class.

Students demonstrated their application of observation skills and recall of choreography, patterns and sequences.

COGNITIVE DANCE SKILLS – RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS	MEAN	SD
Applies observation skills	61.6%	39.2%
Learns and recalls choreography, patterns and sequences	90.2%	12.4%
Attention to protocol, routine and structure of dance class	91.5%	18.1%
Problem solving	56.8%	30%

Teachers observed improvement in observation and problem solving skills.

COGNITIVE DANCE SKILLS – TEACHER SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
My students developed and applied observation skills, such as identifying details and comparing and contrasting, through Dancing Classrooms	42.2%	40.5%	11.2%	5.2%	0.9%
My students observed and benefited from the protocols, routine and structure of the dance classes	53.9%	40%	2.6%	2.6%	0.9%
My students developed problem solving skills through Dancing Classrooms	28.7%	42.6%	18.3%	9.6%	0.9%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 83% of teachers reported that their students developed and applied observation skills through Dancing Classrooms
- 94% of teachers reported that their students benefited from the protocols, routine and structure of the dance classes through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 71% of teachers reported that their students developed problem solving skills through participating in Dancing Classrooms

COGNITIVE DANCE SKILLS – TEACHER SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
My students developed and applied observation skills, such as identifying details and comparing and contrasting, through Dancing Classrooms	4.18	0.89
My students observed and benefited from the protocols, routine and structure of the dance classes	4.43	0.75
My students developed problem solving skills through Dancing Classrooms	3.89	0.96

Students’ dance skills noticeably improved over the course of the residencies, particularly in the areas of movement quality, musicality, and reflecting the qualities of each unique style of dance.

Many of my students were very nervous at the start of the program, but they all learned to love ballroom dancing and were very sad to see it end. – Teacher

This is a wonderful program that introduces young students to another genre of dance. It allows them the opportunity to open their minds to dances that may not otherwise be available to them. – Teacher

Demonstrating Quality of Movement and Grace

The students learned the criteria for performing each ballroom dance with the qualities of movement relevant to each musical style. As students mastered the choreography for each dance, they also began to create more fluid and aesthetically appealing movements. Their movements were progressively more controlled, deliberate and “elegant.”

For instance, we observed students rehearsing the swing dance exuding great energy, with steps that were high and lively. One of our observers wrote, “Several students had an extra spring in their jump during the swing. It made the dance seem livelier. It was almost as if the students were defying gravity at times.” Another wrote that, “One student demonstrated particularly light and graceful spins during the swing. During the tango, one student took care to lift her leg extra high in a controlled manner as she stepped backwards.”

Students would develop fluid movements, beginning to execute complex steps while giving the appearance that they not difficult. A pair of students might perform a polished slide and dip perfectly together during the tango. Others would execute elegant dips during side steps in the foxtrot. We observed that “Two students stepped out (away from the center of the circle) during the rumba. They executed this very smoothly, making it look easy. During the rumba, two students executed very fluid turns, meeting after the turn right in time with the music.” While dancing the merengue, we observed how “two students demonstrated particular fluidity in all of their movements throughout the dance. During the swing in round one, two students let their outstretched arms fly around, but it was totally coordinated and controlled. They also smiled throughout and had a great time.”

Responding to Rhythm and Tempo

Students learned to accurately respond to the rhythmic characteristics of the musical genres represented by each ballroom dance. Students practiced dancing in tempo and counting beats in order to successfully execute the choreography. We observed a teaching artist turning off the music halfway through the stomp, with most of the students maintaining the tempo without the music for the rest of the dance. Students would adapt to each dance, for instance responding to the faster pace of the merengue with more energy and lighter movements. Students would execute the change in tempo between the rumba, foxtrot and merengue without missing a beat, although students might sometimes rush ahead as they got carried away in their excitement, for instance during the heel-toe polka. As they gained expertise, some students creatively elaborated on the dances. For instance, after completing a rumba we observed students doing extra spins in time with the music before bowing to their partners.

Physical Coordination, Balance and Confidence

Students developed their physical coordination and balance through the dance lessons. As students practiced, they appeared to develop a greater awareness of their own personal space and learned to respect the personal space of fellow dancers. Over the course of the residencies, they discovered how to gauge and control their speed, pacing, and physical control in relation to fellow dancers. We observed this process, for instance, as we watched a couple of students making small mistakes, laughing to themselves in a noticeably relaxed manner, and then improving.

Students practiced dancing to different levels, dynamics and accents. During a stomp practice, the teaching artist (TA) led the students through a move: “Down the stairs!” The students and the TA pretended to walk downstairs, gradually getting lower to the ground as they walked. During a tango rehearsal, couples might exaggerate their lean during the corte, getting especially low to the ground. Students would practice getting into their “dance frames.” A TA might ask them to assume “racetrack” position or “pancake” dance frame. The TA would then adjust their dance frames one by one. After a class performance of the tango, when the music stopped the TA would compliment their ability to maintain their dance frame.

Observation Skills and Applying Feedback

The Dancing Classroom lessons emphasized improvement of observation skills as they learned the characteristic details of each dance. Students learned from formally and informally observing each other perform the dances. They were often asked to verbalize their observations.

The teaching artists asked for student feedback when modeling a dance. For instance, a TA demonstrated the box step in a waltz and then asked the students to identify the shape that she outlined (a square). Or when demonstrating the merengue the TA might do an incorrect basic step followed by the correct step and ask the students to identify the difference. Students would focus intently on the TA and try to replicate the movements. As a TA modeled the rumba she would ask students to count aloud how many rectangles and triangles were created by the dance steps. She would then say, “I challenge you to do all of the shapes without stopping.” The students were focused and responded by moving their feet in triangle and rectangle shapes

Students applied feedback from teaching artists and their peers. The TA might explain the starting position of the swing dance: “For swing, you're going to drop the elbow sandwich. Nose and toes to the center, hand around your partner.” Or after a TA advised them to make their steps “clear and crisp” students’ steps would be noticeably more pronounced. When some students were having trouble with a new version of a promenade, the TA gave them some tips: “You’re not doing a twirl, just a half a circle. Think of the promenade as opening a door. A door just revolves on its hinges.” More students were able to execute the dance after receiving this advice.

Students learned to adapt to the Dancing Classrooms nomenclature for dance frames and steps. Requests for “Nice and tall. Elegant! Chicken wings!” would result in noticeably improved dance frames. In response to “Crispy wings!” a pair made sure that their elbows formed a right angle, with their arms pointing straight up. Students would correct their posture when the TA reminded them that their dance frames could be stronger.

Teaching artists modeled the steps, resulting in improved student performance. In one observed class, students demonstrated a noticeable improvement in the footwork of the promenade/scorpion after the TA demonstrated it in detail. In another class, a boy was stiff at first, but carefully making sure to correctly use his back foot in the heel-toe jump. Most of his classmates were also having trouble with this movement. The TA modeled with the boy. He almost mastered the movement, but then needed more help. The TA continued to dance with the boy, as he kept focused and moved his feet as she did while turning. The class applauded him and then they all tried it.

A student of mine who had difficulty with following directions really impressed me with his ability to learn the steps to the dances and follow directions. – Teacher

Problem Solving and Self-Assessment

Students helped each other during the dances. For example, a girl in one class, who was a particularly strong dancer, called out the moves to each of her teammates. She would quickly teach them the correct steps when the music paused, helping them understand where they should end up or what they were supposed to do.

In another class, we observed a boy who progressively improved his execution of the swing dance as he moved from partner to partner. At first, his eyebrows were furrowed as he whispered the counts to himself. By the time he joined his second partner he was not mouthing the counts and his timing was improved. By the time he got to his third partner he was almost completely accurate and was adding an exaggerated leg stretch when his partner would spin. His leg was extended and as he put his heel down on the ground he pointed his toes up purposefully, in sync with the tempo of the music. The repetition and trading of partners allowed him the space to reflect. This boy’s behaviors demonstrated his problem-solving skills, and his commitment to artistic expression through dance and music. During another observation a student asked the TA to review the waltz box step from the lady’s perspective. Another student asked the TA to go over the chain step. Oftentimes, students would improve through observing their classmates. One student, when going over the waltz, started stepping with the wrong foot. She shuffled her feet and watched her partner to correct herself.

Social-Emotional Learning

The children benefited greatly from their participation in the program in many facets: through self-esteem, with social-emotional connection to one another, with learning skills that they can take with them throughout their life – life lessons, kindness, so many things. – Teacher

Dancing Classrooms instruction developed students' social and collaborative skills and improved their relationships with peers and adults.

Students learned to successfully collaborate with a partner and show support to peers as they developed social confidence.

- **93% of students our researchers observed achievement in cooperative skills**
- **71% of students our researchers observed improvement in social confidence**
- **93% of teachers observed improvement in collaborative and teamwork skills through Dancing Classrooms**
- **93% of teachers observed improvement in students' self-confidence through Dancing Classrooms**
- **91% of collaborating teachers observed improvement in social confidence through Dancing Classrooms**

Dancing Classrooms supported development of emotional skills and positive changes in self-perceptions. The Dancing Classroom approach cultivated positive behavioral skills that ensured an effective learning experience, particularly affecting self-discipline, focus, engagement, and a sense of ownership of the learning process.

During site visits, our researchers observed that at least:

- **95% of students demonstrated engagement and motivation**
- **88% of students demonstrated self-discipline and focus**

Collaborating teachers agreed:

- **83% of teachers reported that their students improved self-discipline and self-control through participating in Dancing Classrooms**
- **88% of teachers reported that their students demonstrated improved engagement and motivation through participating in Dancing Classrooms**
- **92% of teachers reported that their students developed a sense of mastery and achievement through participating in Dancing Classrooms**

Our research team observed 93% of students demonstrating cooperative skills, 71% of students demonstrating social confidence and 88% demonstrating self-discipline and focus while participating in Dancing Classrooms.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING – RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS	MEAN	SD
Cooperative and collaborative skills	92.9%	16.9%
Social confidence	71.2%	26.5%
Self-discipline, focus and task persistence	87.5%	18.8%
Engagement and motivation	94.9%	13.8%

Students developed collaborative and social skills, self-confidence, social confidence and improved relationships with teachers through Dancing Classrooms.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – TEACHER SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
My students developed collaborative and teamwork skills through Dancing Classrooms	52.6%	40.5%	5.2%	1.7%	0%
My students developed self-confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms	50%	43.1%	5.2%	1.7%	0%
My students demonstrated improved social confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms	50.4%	40.9%	6.1%	1.7%	0.9%
My students developed better relationships with teachers through Dancing Classrooms	33%	46.1%	13.9%	5.2%	1.7%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 93% of teachers reported that their students demonstrated improved collaborative and teamwork skills through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 93% of teachers reported that their students developed self-confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 91% of teachers reported that their students developed social confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 79% of teachers reported that their students developed better relationships with their teachers through Dancing Classrooms

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – TEACHER SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
My students developed collaborative and teamwork skills through Dancing Classrooms	4.44	0.68
My students developed self-confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.41	0.67
My students demonstrated improved social confidence through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.38	0.76
My students developed better relationships with teachers through Dancing Classrooms	4.03	0.92

Students developed self-discipline, an ability to focus and stay on task, and a sense of mastery and achievement – while expressing joy – through Dancing Classrooms.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF SELF – TEACHER SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
My students demonstrated improved self-discipline and self-control through participating in Dancing Classrooms	26.7%	56.9%	8.6%	7.8%	0%
My students demonstrated improved engagement and motivation through participating in Dancing Classrooms	38.3%	49.6%	7.8%	3.5%	0.9%
My students developed a sense of mastery and achievement through participating in Dancing Classrooms	41.7%	50.4%	7%	0.9%	0%
My students demonstrated focus and ability to stay on task through Dancing Classrooms	26.1%	53%	13.9%	7%	0%
My students expressed joy and a sense of fun through Dancing Classrooms	61.2%	32.8%	3.4%	2.6%	0%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 84% of teachers reported that their students improved self-discipline and self-control through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 88% of teachers reported that their students demonstrated improved engagement and motivation through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 92% of teachers reported that their students developed a sense of mastery and achievement through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 79% of teachers reported that their students demonstrated focus and ability to stay on task through participating in Dancing Classrooms
- 94% of teachers reported that their students expressed joy and a sense of fun through participating in Dancing Classrooms

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF SELF – TEACHER SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
My students demonstrated improved self-discipline and self-control through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.03	0.82
My students demonstrated improved engagement and motivation through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.21	0.80
My students developed a sense of mastery and achievement through participating in Dancing Classrooms	4.33	0.65
My students demonstrated focus and ability to stay on task through Dancing Classrooms	3.98	0.83
My students expressed joy and a sense of fun through Dancing Classrooms	4.53	0.69

Collaboration and Teamwork

Students strengthened their collaborative skills by working with their dancing partners and the overall classroom ensemble.

Students continually switched partners during lessons, which helped foster a sense of classroom community.

Students learned how to work as a team and persevere through challenges. – Teacher

When it came to performing and competing you saw the effect of the kids coming together and being part of the team. It was really a different strategy to use – that wasn't so apparent to the kids – to help them interact with one another. – Principal

Students naturally began to help each other due to the interactive structure of the lessons and the friendly, constructive atmosphere. One student we observed explained to his partner during a slide in the tango, “This foot comes forward, not this foot.” Another student said during the rumba, “No, you want to turn the other way.” The collaborative dancing often led to improvement in classroom climate, with students gaining comfort in interacting with their peers and expressing themselves in other lessons.

The climate in my room changed in that they just were more comfortable with each other. When we do class discussions they felt safer because everybody had been so vulnerable through the dancing. – Teacher

*Students learned to respect one another by being able to dance with different partners.
– Teacher*

I saw many students learn how to interact with each other in much more productive ways. Not only did it affect students individually, but it also affected how the class worked together and interacted with each other. – Teacher

Self-Confidence and Social Confidence

The students visibly projected self-confidence in their movements, language and social interactions as they gained mastery of each ballroom dance.

During observations we noticed students making more eye contact with partners, smiling, projecting a confident and relaxed posture, and holding their heads up with pride.

Dancing Classrooms truly gives them a sense of confidence that many of the children cannot gain while sitting in the seats of their classroom on a daily basis. They get to learn differently through movement. – Teacher

Many students were able to overcome an initial reluctance and begin to dance with confidence.

I never knew that I could dance. – Student

Students who were shy at first displayed confidence by the end. – Teacher

A teacher described how one student overcame initial inhibitions to develop dance skills, leading to a breakthrough in his peer relationships. She attributed his success to the Dancing Classrooms program.

This was a child who quite often was just reluctant to participate in his own classroom. And often I felt he was teased. And then because he was good at the merengue, all of a sudden the children started really responding and cheering for him. They were proud and clapping and built this boy's self-esteem up. – Teacher

We asked the teacher to explain how the program could help students develop their social confidence. She cited the program's emphasis on adult behavior and expectations, high-quality music, a sense of purpose, and the scaffolded pedagogy.

Well, I think their approach is wonderful because they come to the school treating everybody like ladies and gentlemen who are about to undertake some special event. We have a goal in mind – to do something that they can accomplish and feel good about at the same time. They teach each skill in small measures that the children can easily copy and reproduce with a partner, and then they build on that skill. And because we use such high-level music, it makes them feel like they are doing something really wonderful, like young adults. They realize that they were treating them with the kind of respect and rapport that we would treat an adult. – Teacher

Some students had social breakthroughs that might not have occurred without the program.

One of my fifth grade students had a hard time making friends and feeling comfortable at school – kind of socially withdrawn from the group. When Ballroom started, it really just transformed who he was. You could just see every week – slowly building confidence and standing up

straighter, being more proud of himself. And while he wasn't the best dancer or chosen to be on the competition team he was able to do a demonstration for the parents with all the students. To see him now – I'm even getting chills thinking about it. He now is playing with the other students, engaging in conversations with students in class. Or choosing to sit at lunch tables with kids that he never had before. – Principal

The program provided a unique opportunity for some otherwise struggling students to “shine.”

He was very much at risk with academic achievement as well as with his social-emotional well-being. He comes from a very challenging home. In Dancing Classrooms, he really had a chance to shine. He was much more open to moving and enjoying the music. This was a forum in which he could be successful. And this was so important because in the academic world maybe he is not the superstar of the class. But in Dancing Classrooms he was the leader and he showed the children that not only does he have things that he is good at, but he also has things that he can be very proud of and the other children recognized how wonderful he was. – Teacher

And this young man volunteered to stand up in front of all his peers in this gym full of families. And he stepped in and was the partner for four girls that didn't have a partner. And it actually gave me a lump in my throat because I thought, “This is a boy who's struggled all year socially. And he can feel successful.” Just in general, I think a lot of boys and girls surprised me with how engaged they were, knowing that it was kind of awkward at first to touch boys' hands and all of those little things. I really do feel like they learned some powerful social skills and they got over some humps that they wouldn't have if we didn't have this program. – Principal

The confidence engendered by the program carried over into other settings.

I've always loved this program and its impact on the students. I have had so many who gained so much confidence and carried that with them throughout middle school and high school. I've had the most shy become transformed into the most outgoing and confident students. – Teacher

Many students gained social confidence and demonstrated significant improvement in their peer relations.

This young man had very low self-confidence. He acted out and always managed to call negative attention to himself. The change in his behavior and attitude towards school was so positive this year. I attribute it to Dancing Classrooms. He shined so much. This is a boy who previously had no self-confidence and is now being accepted and sought out by his peers. – Teacher

One of our male students was not quite social or interactive at the beginning of the year. He wasn't much of a smiler, either. By the end of the program he made friends, interacted with others during recess, participated more during group and class instruction and is constantly smiling. – Teacher

Boys and girls learned to interact in a respectful and supportive manner. Respect between boys and girls carried over beyond the dance classes.

It's always with the boys. They're like "Oh, we've got to hold those girls' hands." And they learn how to respect and work with one another. And one of the things that I have found is our discipline [problems] have gone down in fifth grade. – Principal

Our kids are able to interact in a much more mature way. They are just taught to work with each other. They build a rapport with one another. So when they are in the classrooms and they are collaborating on projects, it's much more comfortable. They are more at ease, less anxiety, less of that boy-girl thing. It's more of a group. They are able to really work together. – Principal

It's gotten them to value every person and learn how to treat people in a way that is very respectful and courteous. When they go back to their classrooms, the teachers see that transference. – Principal

Teachers valued the program's emphasis on manners, social etiquette and mature behavior. They believed the effects were sustained beyond the dance classes.

It teaches them a sense of etiquette, too – not only with dance but how to treat another individual. To have eye contact with them. To be able to hold hands for dancing. To treat women as ladies and men acting as gentlemen. I think that's very important to establish for a young learner because you want to show them that this is how you would act as an adult when you go to a wedding. You might say, "May I have this dance?" "Yes, with pleasure." And it gives them a sense of propriety which we don't really talk about in school so much because we're constantly working on different kinds of skills. – Teacher

It changed us to be more respectful to other people and how to use our manners more. – Student

We give more respect to the teachers and our other students. – Student

Schools rarely emphasize the development of these kinds of social skills. A teacher praised the "humanity" of focusing on positive, direct interaction as an antidote to disengaged digital communication.

I have to say that my students come out of the program feeling so happy and successful about themselves. And the families around us, too, they feel very joyous at the events. I think it brings into the school a sort of humanity that is lacking sometimes. I believe that the work is very important – to be teaching social skills at such a young age. It will have a huge impact, especially considering that most children are not really communicating with their eyes and their face and working on these skills. Now we are in a climate where most children communicate by text message or cell phone or email. And they are losing a lot of interpersonal skills. It should be in

every school, quite frankly, because these are the skills that children need to become nicely well-rounded, kind, caring individuals. – Teacher

Demonstrating Self-Discipline and Focus

Dancing Classrooms instruction inherently expected students to be engaged, apply self-discipline and positively interact with one another. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for controlling their behavior. They learned to focus and stay on task.

With a tough group of students, the dance teacher instilled a community of proper manners, etiquette and maturity. – Teacher

Students learned to follow the Dancing Classrooms protocol and code of conduct established in the residencies. The structure and pacing of the lessons – and the artists’ control of the classroom – encouraged students to perform effectively with a partner and the ensemble.

I have a male student who is known to be a bit rowdy and antsy and often acts out. Through the program he was able to show restraint. – Teacher

The structure and expectations provided by the teaching artists helped improve students’ focus and discipline.

The students learned to respect working with a partner of the opposite sex and how to present themselves on stage. – Teacher

All of the students had an intense, focused look in their eyes. They smiled periodically, but it was easy to tell that they were completely in the moment. – Observation report

Engagement and Motivation

Students exuded a sense of joy and fun during the lessons. They showed enthusiasm, a desire to excel, and curiosity about learning the material. The rapid pace of the lessons and the challenging content engaged students and motivated them to stay on task.

Even my most difficult students benefit greatly from this program, even more so than the other children, because it allows them to express themselves differently and to learn in a different way that seems to inspire them like nothing else. – Teacher

They take their practice seriously. These are kids who didn’t want to maybe even talk to each other. They’re rooting for each other and holding each other’s hands, and almost like in unison say, “Okay, we can do this.” And they ask me, “We’re going to have Dancing Classrooms next year, right?” – Principal

We observed a focused and enthusiastic “buzz” in the classroom, manifested by the students’ energy and effort, eye contact, posture, and mutual support. They were not always silent while dancing and often their conversation was about helping each other find the right partner or align their steps with the rhythm. During an observation, we watched a couple of students who couldn’t stop smiling as they did the hesitation step, enjoying the “zip.” When doing a promenade, one student exaggerated her steps, doing stomps. Another student, when switching partners, did a sort of run and slide. We watched as students, exploring the boogie walk, laughed with enjoyment while other students exchanged excited glances.

Engagement peaked when the TA was showing the students the new versions of the promenade and the scorpion. Students seemed especially motivated to get the new version of the promenade down. They were fascinated by the new turn at the end. – Observation report

Students were particularly enthusiastic during the stomp at the end of class. This dance gave them a nice break from the usual partner routines and it seems like it gave the students a chance to use any leftover energy that they had. One student exaggerated her movements during this routine adding a spring to every step. – Observation report

After the third pair demonstrated the waltz, one student in the audience gave them very loud and noticeable applause. A few students smiled repeatedly after executing the turns in the merengue. This feeling was contagious. The joy that a few students felt in performing this dance immediately spread to their neighbors. – Observation report

Students were highly motivated to engage in lessons and many demonstrated a sense of ownership over their learning experience.

Some students really enjoy entering the gym in escort position and make a grand entrance with exaggerated movement. Students are eager to volunteer to demonstrate. Students are still energetic after practicing the tango many times. The class says the steps aloud as they dance. – Observation report

One student added extra jumps to the music, even when the students were in transition between partners. An overwhelming majority of students smiled throughout the heel-toe polka. One student actually jumped over to his next partner. – Observation report

Students often went beyond “correct” performance of the dances and demonstrated a focused commitment to artistic expression through dance.

Two students did a very dramatic starburst. They raised their arms fast and let them fall slowly while moving their fingers and smiling at each other. – Observation report

The pair that demonstrated the swing was extremely focused. They seemed completely committed to doing their best work, and they provided the rest of the class with exemplary models of artistic engagement. – Observation report

Students became noticeably more engaged when performing in the battle rounds. One student added her own extra twist to the crossover in the rumba. She seemed to be putting forth her best effort in trying to add as much beauty as possible to each step. – Observation report

The program provided a unique opportunity for students to succeed in school and demonstrate their commitment to families and the school community.

I have a mute child that never smiles. He never stopped smiling while dancing. – Teacher

One child has a pretty rough home life. His parents are split up and his babysitter takes care of him a lot of the time. During practices, he kept telling me his dad was going to take the train from far away to come and watch him dance at the competition. He wanted to make sure he had the exact address so that he could tell his dad which train to take and where to get off and walk. When the competition began, his dad wasn't there yet. His teacher and I were looking around – so was the child – to find him. As soon as the child stepped onto the dance floor to dance his merengue, he spotted his dad in the crowd. He smiled the widest, brightest smile I've ever seen. It could have lit up the whole room. He kept looking over at his dad during his dance to make sure he was still watching him. His dad came over to tell him what a good job he did, and this child never stopped smiling. When our team got bronze, he continued to be so proud of himself and kept on smiling, parading around with his rainbow ribbon. – Teacher

Implementation

Teaching Artists and the Dulaine Method

Teaching artists consistently applied the principles of the Dulaine Method, including demonstrating respect and compassion in the classroom, creating a safe place and positive tone, and maintaining command and control of the learning environment. Their instruction optimized the use of verbal and body language and effectively controlled the flow of the lesson, with a consistent lesson structure and protocol from week to week.

Our research team documented the teaching artists' effective application of respect and compassion, creation of a safe place, and optimized use of verbal and body language in every lesson we observed.

THE DULAINE METHOD AND INSTRUCTION – RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS	YES
Demonstrating respect and compassion	100%
Being present	100%
Creating a safe place	100%
Asserting command and control of learning environment	98.8%
Optimizing use of verbal language and body language	100%
Humor and joy	100%
Maintaining flow and consistency of the lesson	97.6%

Teachers reported that the teaching artists emphasized respect and compassion, created a safe place for learning, and were well-prepared and effective.

INSTRUCTION – TEACHER SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
The Dancing Classrooms teaching artist emphasized respect and compassion in his/her instruction	69.8%	26.7%	0.9%	1.7%	0.9%
The teaching artist created a "safe place" where all students felt comfortable participating	71.6%	25%	1.7%	1.7%	0%
The teaching artist was well-prepared and effective in managing the learning environment	67.2%	24.1%	2.6%	5.2%	0.9%
The teaching artist lessons were well-sequenced and consistent	66.4%	25.9%	1.7%	5.2%	0.9%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 97% of teachers reported that teaching artists emphasized respect and compassion in their instruction

- 97% of teachers reported that teaching artists created a safe place where all students felt comfortable participating
- 91% of teachers reported that teaching artists were well-prepared and effective in managing the learning environment
- 92% of teachers reported that lessons were well-sequenced and consistent

INSTRUCTION – TEACHER SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
The Dancing Classrooms teaching artist emphasized respect and compassion in his/her instruction	4.63	0.68
The teaching artist created a "safe place" where all students felt comfortable participating	4.66	0.60
The teaching artist was well-prepared and effective in managing the learning environment	4.52	0.85
The teaching artist lessons were well-sequenced and consistent	4.52	0.84

Demonstrating Respect and Compassion

Teaching artists encouraged students to maintain self-respect and respect for others. The artists modeled the respectful behavior they expected from the students.

Our dance teacher was excellent, professional and a great role model for my boys in class.
– Teacher

The dance instructors model this air of respect and manners that is a little bit lost in our culture.
– Teacher

Even when students would test the behavior boundaries, the TAs would remain patient and courteous, modeling the appropriate behavior.

I think that they treat the children like ladies and gentlemen, showing them you can be a teacher and lead with a kind and caring attitude and also as a model for them to listen to and respect.
– Teacher

Creating a Safe Place

Teaching artists cultivated a supportive and low-risk environment where students were free to try something new and make mistakes along the way. Teaching artists intentionally encouraged the idea that all participants – adults and students – were learning together as equals. They tactfully discouraged negative behavior such as teasing, bullying or inappropriately criticizing fellow dancers. They clarified social boundaries and ensured that the experience was inclusive.

[The teaching artist] danced with every single student in the class. She was always clear, quick and concise with her directions. She respectfully referred to the boy and girl partners as teammates. – Observation report

[The teaching artist] was positive, encouraging and supportive. He modeled the dance moves, made eye contact with the students, and used a soothing voice to talk to them to deliver instructions and feedback. His feedback was constructive and detailed with specific ways to fix the choreography. He gave the class positive feedback as much as possible but never was over the top with his compliments. His teaching was very genuine. – Observation report

Command and Control of Learning Environment

Teaching artists effectively managed lessons from start to finish, projecting “presence.” The teaching artists strategically kept the students focused and on task through attention to routine and protocol. Students knew what was expected and behaved accordingly.

Teaching artists projected commitment in teaching the material and their excitement was contagious. There were few behavior difficulties as the TAs maintained a strong rapport with the students.

There were very few times that the teaching artist had to call the class’ attention back to dancing. When she did she was fair, firm and predictable. The students and teachers responded to her with respect. She also used non-verbal cues to get the students’ attention. One time she waved hands in the air silently and the students noticed this, stopped talking and imitated her motion. – Observation report

As they come onto the stage, some students are shy, some are joking around, and some are distracted. The class suddenly becomes focused as she demonstrates in the center of the circle. Next, they practice the promenade, but individually while still in a circle, and move in the same direction. The class suddenly becomes focused as she demonstrates in the center of the circle. Next, they practice the promenade, but individually while still in a circle, and move in the same direction. The TA lowers her voice so that it’s very quiet and the students have to be quiet to hear her. – Observation report

Artists managed behavior effectively and appropriately and avoided rewarding negative behavior.

The TA has the class sit on the floor and explained that they did well, but have room for improvement as far as behavior is concerned. TA: “You proved to us you’re talented, so why waste time at the beginning?” The TA explains they can do better, but frames it in a positive way. “You’re in 5th grade, so you can manage time well.” – Observation report

Optimizing Use of Verbal Language and Body Language

Teaching artists continuously used positive reinforcement and encouragement in words, tone and body language. They effectively used physical and verbal communication to reinforce instruction.

*After demonstrating the box step in detail, she made sure that the student who had asked her to go over it more understood: “Do you get it? It takes practice.” The TA then introduced the chain step by performing it and seeing what students’ perceptions were: “Watch my feet and tell me what shape I make.” Student: “A zigzag with boxes.” When teaching the chain step, some students were still confused after several demonstrations and the chance to practice the move. The TA had all of the boys line up behind her and follow her movements, drilling the step repeatedly. TA: “You got it! High five all around!” (There was noticeable improvement after this.)
– Observation report*

TA: “I want your steps to be clear and crisp!” The TA said this with an especially clear and crisp voice, enunciating the consonants in ‘crisp’ as much as she could. – Observation report

The teaching artists enthusiastically responded when students were successful at doing the dances.

The TA complemented one pair for having good eye contact during the tango: “Eye contact – good!” – Observation report

*The TA pointed out a student who was making an appropriate tango face that fit the mood of the dance: “This gentleman had a good serious tango face. He was very focused.”
– Observation report*

Setting the Tone with Humor and Joy

Teaching artists set the tone of their residencies by projecting genuine joy, energy, humor and elegance in their instruction.

The teaching artists were models of energy and enthusiasm, projecting their positive attitudes and a love for the subject matter. They set an example, infusing humor and joy throughout the lessons.

Our teaching artist was amazing in creating cohesion, discipline and fun for the students. She taught them so much while they enjoyed themselves and overcame some awkwardness, as well. She is a true teacher and an amazing dance instructor. – Teacher

Her upbeat personality and consistent manner kept the class energy on the stage moving joyfully. – Observation report

The TA was a consistent model of enthusiasm. Her presence seemed to rub off on the students. “I need you to shake it and smile. If you just do it with your arms, the audience won’t want to

dance with us.” After the pair demonstration of the swing, the TA gave them some constructive criticism: “That was good. We were just missing some smiles.” – Observation report

The teaching artists’ modeling was often exceptional, allowing the students to copy and incorporate elegance and artistry into their dancing.

At one point, the TA performed a flashy version of the promenade, and her movements seemed contagious as far as setting the tone was concerned. All of the students watched the TA in awe, noticeably impressed. – Observation report

When demonstrating the techniques, the TA used voice inflection very effectively to further engage the students. She would at times use a higher voice (sounding excited) and then a lower voice (sounding bored). When showing the students the rock step the TA directed the students to “rock back and forth, like a see saw.” She also started singing while they were first trying the move: “rock a-bye baby, on the tree top.” The students thought that this was very funny. – Observation report

Maintaining Flow and Consistency of the Lesson

Lessons were well-paced with consistent protocols. Students were constantly moving, switching partners or getting set up for the next move. The teaching artists were highly skilled in keeping the group lessons on track while still giving students individual attention, as needed.

The instructor managed to make the most uncomfortable situations feel fun because they rotate the dance partners so frequently that they never have time to soak in their discomfort. You’re moving quickly. The sessions felt like they went very fast. Nobody ever raised their voice to children. It was all upbeat. – Teacher

Classroom Teachers and Dance Instruction

Most teachers enthusiastically supported the Dancing Classroom program. Teachers generally respected the teaching artists’ lead role and approach to behavior management and instruction. The teachers often supported the teaching artists, by helping students with steps, applying the Dancing Classroom vocabulary and referring to the performance criteria. The teachers’ support was most effective when they participated in the classes.

During our observations, most teachers participated alongside students and played an active role in the lessons. They were supportive of the teaching artists’ instructional approach and often adapted them as their own. We observed classroom teachers helping students with specific steps, posture, frames and affect.

The teacher exuded a consistent presence in this class, trying to get the students to constantly be aware of where they are and how much space they have. – Observation report

It was the best thing that could have happened in my class. I had never danced, and they were low on girls. I got to be one of the girls. So I was learning with them and it wasn't easy for me. I would step on their feet and I'd forget which way we were going, or I'd step in when I'm supposed to step back. So my boys got to be in a position, I think, where they got to see me learn something new and be uncomfortable and then overcome it, and just have a positive attitude. Same with them. Some of them are so uncomfortable with it but we were learning it together. Nobody knew anything when we started and then we made that journey together and we had so much fun. It was about that camaraderie. –Teacher

We found that the most effective collaborating teachers were able to find the right balance between participating in the lessons while also ceding authority to the teaching artist. Students were clearly more engaged when the teachers enthusiastically participated in the lessons. However, when some teachers tried to overly “control” their students it became more difficult for the TAs to apply the presence, compassion and joy inherent to the Dancing Classrooms pedagogy.

Teachers expressed strong support for the program.

They bring in music from all parts of the world. We need our students to have an appreciation for all cultures and multicultural music is the best way to do that. The kids have a sense of where the music comes from and what those countries have to offer. And I think that's important. I think they should all have a sense of worldliness but also that we are all connected in some sense. That we all have things in common. – Teacher

This is the best arts program we've had. The teachers know the content and are skilled at managing the classroom. – Teacher

Approximately 82% of teachers participated in the lessons that we observed. The teaching artists had adequate resources for teaching the lessons and about 89% of the classrooms provided sufficient space for an effective dance class.

CLASSROOM CONDITIONS	YES
Teaching environment	89.3%
Adequate resources	90.5%
Classroom teacher participation and support	81.9%

When asked to describe what was most valuable about collaborating with Dancing Classrooms, teachers most often cited the benefits for their students, including their growth in confidence, maturity and social skills. They also valued the spirit of inclusion fostered by the program and the opportunity to learn an art form that they enjoyed.

Most valuable: teacher sample responses

- *I enjoyed watching them grow with each other. In the beginning, the students were apprehensive. They didn't want to hold hands or dance with each other. Later on they developed confidence and danced with each other without hesitation.*
- *Students' self-confidence and social skills increased.*
- *Watching our very academic students learn a non-academic discipline and laugh along the way was wonderful. For me, it is great to see their interactions from a non-participant observer role. I learn a lot from watching and I really enjoy it.*
- *I love the sense of teamwork and collaboration that my students take from the program.*
- *The students being able to step out of their comfort zones, to interact positively with one another, and to learn something that many do not have the privilege of learning.*
- *The preparation of the teaching artist was excellent. This helped to keep the class focused in the time we spent together. It was active, motivating and well-paced.*
- *The most valuable part to me was seeing the students working together, especially those students who do not ordinarily work together. Some of the students saw their fellow classmates in a different light after the Dancing Classrooms experience.*
- *The students were engaged and motivated to learn. The teaching artist was not only patient but she broke down the choreography in a kid friendly manner, where the students were able to have fun and learn at the same time.*
- *All of the children gained self-confidence and learned the value of respect, elegance and collaboration.*
- *Knowing how much our instructor really knew each and every child in our grade. She is so compassionate and patient and the students really appreciated being treated with respect and kindness.*
- *Working with [the teaching artist] was an incredible experience. He had patience with my class and the kids absolutely loved him. The kids worked with other kids in the class that they normally do not socialize with and it made everyone feel good knowing that dance time was when they could put everything to the side and have fun!*
- *This program really helped to build a sense of community in the classroom. Students interacted with other students who they would not normally speak or talk to.*
- *To me personally, Dancing Classrooms is a program that I wanted to have in the school for years. I had taken ballroom dancing lessons myself and I felt it had such a positive impact on me that I wanted that same opportunity for student. It fosters a family feeling among the whole 5th grade.*
- *I enjoyed being a part of the Dancing Classrooms experience. I found it to be encouraging for my students to watch me dance as well as make mistakes in front of them so that they felt more comfortable.*
- *Having it in the fall allows the students to interact with each other and get to know each other quickly. The structure, motivation and engagement then spill over into the classroom.*
- *In our inclusion class, the students had to treat each other with respect. General education students had to pair up and dance with special education students, and expect to cooperate.*

This wasn't easy for a lot of students. Some students come out of this appreciating a bit more about each other, others not. But the message that it is expected – that they all practice the same routine and work together and perform side-by-side – is a very powerful one.

- *Although my students were respectful towards each other before participating in the residency, I really valued how they interacted with the special education students who danced with my class.*
- *Our instructor was caring and compassionate, especially working with students with disabilities. By the end of the semester, all students were confident and able to perform the dances.*
- *My students are special education students. They really worked well and have demonstrated huge improvement.*

When asked to describe the most challenging aspect of the collaboration, teachers most often cited scheduling conflicts, the reticence of some of their students, insufficient dance space, and the need to cede some instructional control to the teaching artist.

Most challenging: teacher sample responses

- *The most challenging for me as the classroom teacher was arranging the schedule and fitting in the other classes.*
- *Time and schedule.*
- *Time conflict.*
- *The most challenging thing about my collaboration with Dancing Classrooms would have to be motivating reluctant students to participate and become engaged during the lessons.*
- *Not all the students wanted to participate.*
- *What was most challenging was probably having students of the opposite sex dance with another.*
- *I think keeping my students on task and showing respect to each other.*
- *The children this year were particularly difficult behaviorally and immature. Our teaching artist did a fantastic job in managing behaviors and maintaining student attention.*
- *For my students, the most challenging part of this experience was overcoming their fears of dancing in front of an audience. But thanks to our dance instructor, students felt safe and after some lessons were at ease and overcame their fears!*
- *The beginning is always challenging because our students are really resistant at first to get into dance frame, or even pancake position, but [the teaching artist] was extremely patient and understanding.*
- *The initial "I have to dance with a boy/girl" stage.*
- *What was most challenging was lack of space. It was difficult to roll up our rug and move desks every dance session.*
- *Not enough space for students to spread out and dance.*

- *Since I love to dance, as well, I had to learn to adjust to the teaching artist’s style and give up some control over my own managing techniques.*
- *I did not find anything challenging.*
- *Nothing, really.*

Collaboration with Schools

Dancing Classrooms collaborated effectively with the schools, setting up schedules, providing support for the teaching artists and conferring on their specific needs. School administrators believed that the program had a demonstrated impact on students’ academic, social and emotional development, as well as on overall school climate through bringing parents into the school and improving peer relationships.

The parents love it. They get to see their children practicing their behavior, dancing, enjoying school and starting to form healthy habits. – Teacher

COLLABORATION AND SCHOOL CLIMATE – SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEYS	SA	A	N	D	SD
Dancing Classrooms provided adequate logistical support for our collaboration	67.9%	25%	0%	7.1%	0%
Dancing Classrooms was an effective partner for my school	71.4%	28.6%	0%	0%	0%
The Dancing Classrooms teaching artist was well-prepared and effective	78.6%	17.9%	0%	0%	3.6%
Dancing Classrooms improved our school climate	64.3%	28.6%	3.6%	3.6%	0%
Dancing Classrooms increased parent participation in our school	35.7%	35.7%	14.3%	14.3%	0%
Dancing Classrooms improved student peer relationships	50%	35.7%	10.7%	0%	3.6%

SA = strongly agree A = agree N = not sure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

When aggregating “strongly agree” and “agree” ratings:

- 93% of school administrators reported that Dancing Classrooms provided adequate logistical support
- 100% of administrators reported that Dancing Classrooms was an effective partner
- 97% of administrators reported that the teaching artists were well-prepared and effective
- 93% of administrators reported that Dancing Classrooms improved school climate
- 71% of administrators reported that Dancing Classrooms increased parent participation
- 86% of administrators reported that Dancing Classrooms improved student peer relationships

COLLABORATION AND SCHOOL CLIMATE – SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEYS	MEAN	SD
Dancing Classrooms provided adequate logistical support for our collaboration	4.54	0.84
Dancing Classrooms was an effective partner for my school	4.71	0.46
The Dancing Classrooms teaching artist was well-prepared and effective	4.68	0.82
Dancing Classrooms improved our school climate	4.54	0.74
Dancing Classrooms increased parent participation in our school	3.93	1.05
Dancing Classrooms improved student peer relationships	4.29	0.94

When asked how Dancing Classrooms supported their schools' instructional goals, the school administrators cited educational benefits for students, alignment with academic standards and students' social-emotional development.

School administrator sample survey responses

- *Dancing Classrooms supports our vision of providing authentic learning experiences for our students. Their curriculum supports our goal of developing an environment of collaboration, respect and rapport.*
- *We are working to increase respect in our school and it fits right into our goal.*
- *One of our goals is to educate the whole child. Dancing Classrooms not only teaches students to dance, but also gives them the history of each dance thus increasing their cultural knowledge.*
- *Our partnership with Dancing Classrooms exposes our students to numerous cultural experiences which deepens their understanding of music and dance and how that can impact their personal lives.*
- *It supports our instructional goals by teaching students to work together collaboratively.*
- *Dancing Classrooms supports our school instructional goals by working to develop the whole child.*
- *Dancing Classrooms supports our goals of active listening and respectful collaboration.*
- *DC helped to reinforce our school culture of respect, determination, self-confidence and developing of talents which aligns with our instructional goals.*
- *We have an increased awareness of the social-emotional needs of the students and this has improved through Dancing Classrooms.*
- *The teaching artist and classroom teacher collaborated on an assignment that integrated Dancing Classrooms and Common Core Standards. Students wrote and spoke about the connection between Dancing Classrooms and math, science, and social studies. They also noted the emphasis on respect for each other. One of the students compared ballroom dancing to speaking a universal language that everyone could understand. I found that to be powerful observation and a basis for collaboration and cooperation.*
- *Dancing Classrooms allowed students to work with peers as a team. This program sparked interest of dancing with many of our students.*

- *Dancing Classrooms helped our ELLs with speaking.*

When asked to describe what was most valuable about collaborating with Dancing Classrooms, administrators most often cited effects on students' social-emotional learning.

Most valuable: administrator sample responses

- *Dancing Classrooms has been an integral part of our school for the past 5 years. We have now reached a point of students counting the years until they are able to participate. I feel it is a wonderful program that allows all students to tap into their many hidden potentials. The setup of the program is excellent. I have seen students who do not like to participate in anything thrive in this program. It allows students to interact with each other in a different way and this has truly been a life changing experience for many of them. They are more confident as individuals, more respectful of each other and have developed a sense of character and integrity that fits right in line with what we teach our students day in and day out.*
- *This collaboration helps our students develop new relationships and in most cases a lifelong love for dance, evidenced in our alums' conversations about how Dancing Classrooms was the highlight of their fifth grade year.*
- *I believe the most valuable aspect of our collaboration with Dancing Classrooms is teaching the students how to interact in an appropriate setting and teaching them elegance.*
- *Most valuable is the impact that Dancing Classrooms has had on the demeanor of the students. Specifically, I have noticed an improvement in the students' self-confidence and their acceptance of one another.*
- *Teaching the children to work together as a team, to depend on and trust one another.*

When asked to describe the most challenging aspect of the collaboration, school administrators most often cited scheduling, space and funding.

Most challenging: administrator sample responses

- *Scheduling is probably the greatest difficulty. The program does require a big stretch of time and as a school with limited space this sometimes is an issue. We always manage "to figure it out" but it requires creativity!*
- *Finding grant funds to pay for the program and then scheduling.*
- *Space, time and money.*
- *Scheduling was a challenge but we were able to be flexible in our programming.*
- *We do not have a separate gym. We have an all-purpose room that is utilized for many different activities; therefore, space is the biggest challenge. However, our teaching artist was very understanding and flexible when we needed the location to change for the day.*
- *Getting the children used to dancing with a male/female partner.*

- *Nothing is challenging. It is a seamless program.*

When we asked teachers and principals for recommendations for improving the program, they typically mentioned expanding the program through adding more classes, grades and professional development.

Sample teacher recommendations

- *Provide mentor teachers to attend the first few sessions with new teachers in order to help them set expectations and routines.*
- *Provide time for the artist to collaborate with the teaching artist so that best teaching practices can be used to address the unique personalities of the class.*
- *Is there any way to offer classes to teachers in the summer?*
- *Add some way to continue to weave in the dancing throughout the year. Learn more about the origin of the dances.*
- *The program should be longer!*
- *I think the program is excellent just the way it is. Everyone we worked with was cooperative and supportive.*
- *There is nothing to improve anymore because this program is fantastic. We have been with this program for so many years and we would to say, "Thank you."*

Sample principal recommendations

- *It would be great if the program could run for an entire year.*
- *It would be wonderful to extend the program to students in grades six and seven. When those students saw today's culminating event, they were fascinated and engaged.*

Overall Analysis

Dancing Classrooms instruction has a pronounced effect on the development of students' dance skills and social-emotional learning.

As presented throughout this report, our two principal sources of statistical data were our researcher observations and teacher surveys. Results were consistently strong from both measures, and were supported by interview data, descriptive observations and principal surveys. Through triangulating data – comparing results from different measures, sites, researchers, and school years/terms – we concluded that the program was well-implemented and effective, and had an impact on student development in social-emotional learning, as well as dance skills. The measures developed for this study can be revised and applied to more statistically rigorous studies, such as an RCT or QED, to further investigate the program's impact.

The Dulaine the Method contained several distinct instructional strategies that we determined were consistently applied in the classroom. Using the observation and survey data, we conducted a series of stepwise regression analyses to identify the teaching characteristics and classroom conditions that were most likely to predict student growth. To begin the process, we aggregated the observation and survey data into new, overall, variables that reflected teaching characteristics and indicators of student learning. We then used those overall variables for the regression analysis.

The average, or mean, scores for each overall variable are presented in the next section, followed by the regression analysis.

Overall Ratings – Researcher Observations and Teacher Surveys

We obtained mean scores for each area of student development that we observed. Overall averages ranged from about 82% to 85%. This indicates the percentage of students demonstrating behaviors that indicate achievement in each area.

Student Development – Researcher Observations	Mean	SD
Dance Learning and Kinesthetic Development	84.9%	12.5%
Dance Learning and Cognitive Development	81.9%	16.8%
Social Development	84.2%	18.4%
Emotional Development	81.7%	17.0%

We also obtained mean scores for each area of student development assessed through teacher surveys. Because we used a 5-point scale in our survey items (“strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”), average scores could range from 1 to 5. The teacher ratings were high in each area of student development, with the strongest ratings in Dance Learning and Kinesthetic Development, and Social Development.

Student Development – Teacher Surveys	Mean	SD
Dance Learning and Kinesthetic Development	4.48	.60
Dance Learning and Cognitive Development	4.16	.74
Social Development	4.31	.68
Emotional Development	4.22	.64

Observation ratings for Instruction averaged about 99%, indicating strong fidelity to the Dulaine Method. School and Classroom Conditions, reflecting space and resources, were generally rated highly by our observers.

Program Implementation and Instruction – Researcher Observations	Mean	SD
Instruction	99.4%	4.0%
School and Classroom Conditions	87.3%	19.3%

Teachers also rated the teaching artists’ instruction, and adherence to the Dulaine Method, very highly. On a scale of 1 to 5, all ratings were above 4.5, reflecting the teachers’ conclusion that they “strongly agreed” with each Likert scale item about Instruction.

Program Implementation and Instruction – Teacher Surveys	Mean	SD
The Dancing Classrooms teaching artist emphasized respect and compassion in his/her instruction	4.63	.68
The teaching artist created a “safe place” where all students felt comfortable participating	4.66	.60
The teaching artist was well-prepared and effective in managing the learning environment	4.52	.85
The teaching artist lessons were well-sequenced and consistent	4.52	.83

Predictors of Student Development

Using the aggregated variables from the observation and survey data, we conducted stepwise multiple regression analyses to determine the best predictors of improved student development in each area. These analyses can be used to establish models for more extensive quantitative study. In addition, the results are consistent with our qualitative data and give added support to our overall conclusions.

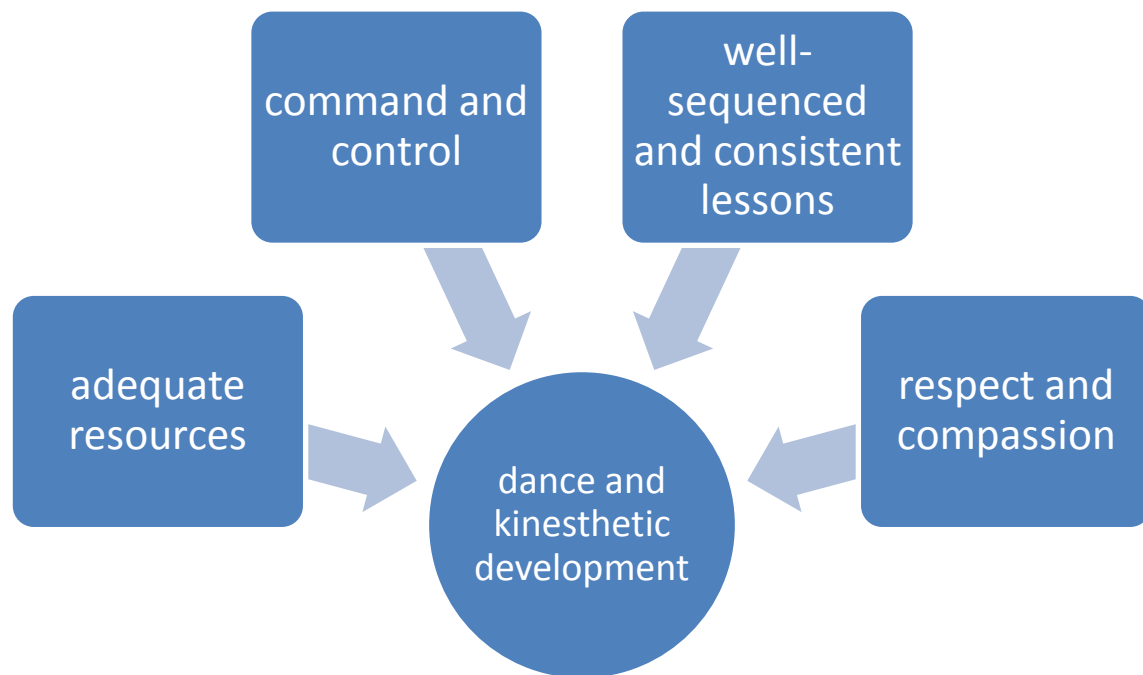
Predictors of Student Development – Observation Data

We found the most significant effects were in classrooms where (1) the teaching artist asserted command and control of the classroom, (2) had a well-sequenced lesson with flow and consistency, and (3) had appropriate resources, such as a working sound system and outlets. Other aspects of the Dulaine Method were so consistently applied during the lessons we observed that there was not enough variation in the data to use it for the regression analysis.

Predictors of Student Development – Teacher Survey Data

We found the most significant effects were in classrooms where (1) the teaching artist emphasized respect and compassion in her/his instruction, (2) the teaching artist was well-prepared and effective in managing the learning environment, and (3) the teaching artist lessons were well-sequenced and effective.

Dance Learning and Kinesthetic Development

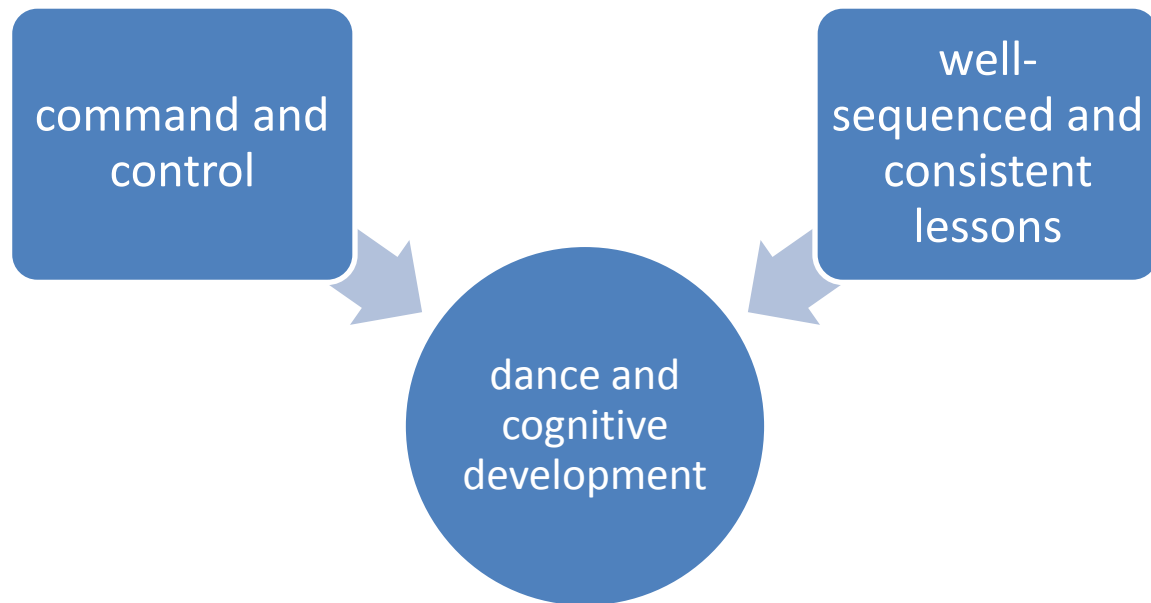


- According to regression analysis of observation data, the provision of **adequate resources** and the teaching artists' **command and control** predicts acquisition of **dance and kinesthetic skills** ($r = .37$; $F = 6.16$; $p < .01$).
- According to regression analysis of teacher survey data, **well-sequenced and consistent TA lessons, emphasis on respect and compassion, and effective management of the learning environment** predicts acquisition of **dance and kinesthetic skills** ($r = .82$; $F = 76.883$; $p < .001$).

These program teaching characteristics had a pronounced effect on students' ability to acquire and demonstrate dance skills. We observed how the teaching artists confidently projected authority with respect and compassion, enabling students to take risks and develop their kinesthetic abilities. The sequencing of lessons helped students develop skills sequentially, through reasonable, scaffolded steps.

Through comparing analyses from all data sources we conclude that Dancing Classrooms had a pronounced impact on students' development of dance and kinesthetic skills.

Dance Learning and Cognitive Development

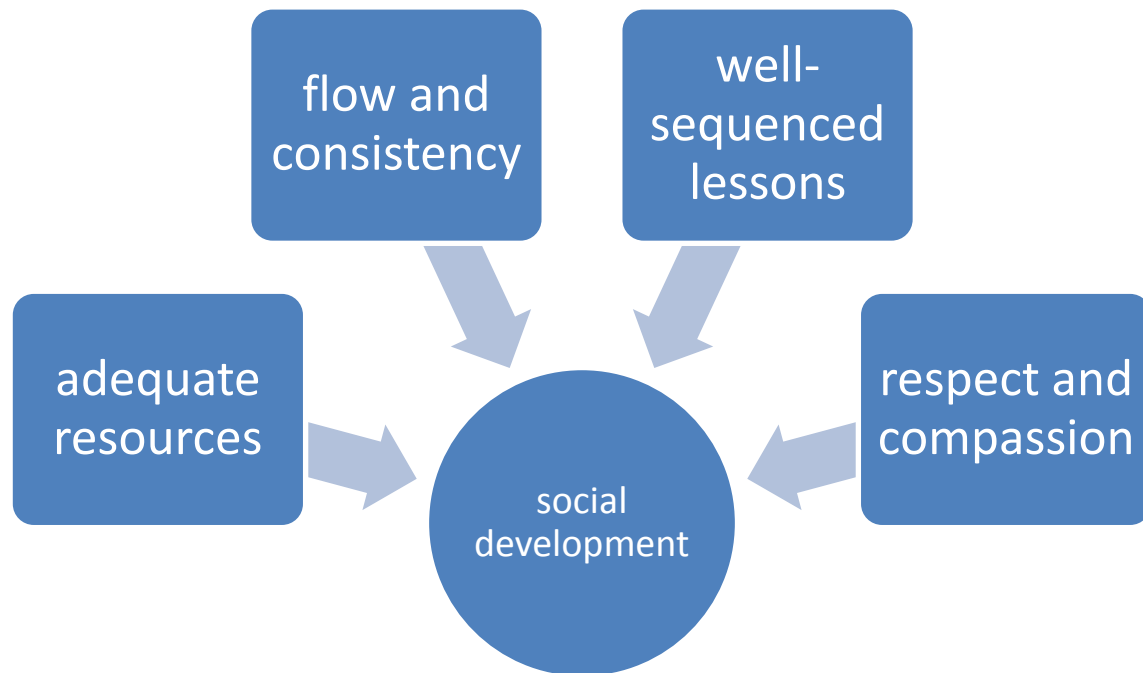


- According to regression analysis of observation data, the teaching artists' **command and control** predicts dimensions of **cognitive development through dance** ($r = .26$; $F = 5.59$; $p < .05$).
- According to regression analysis of teacher survey data, **well-sequenced and consistent TA lessons** predicts dimensions of **cognitive development through dance** ($r = .72$; $F = 120.60$; $p < .001$).

The structure and pacing of the classes, combined with the authoritative command and control of the teaching artists, supported students' development of cognitive skills related to dance instruction, such as observation skills, understanding patterning and sequencing, and problem solving.

Through comparing analyses from all data sources we conclude that Dancing Classrooms had an effect on students' development of cognitive skills related to dance learning.

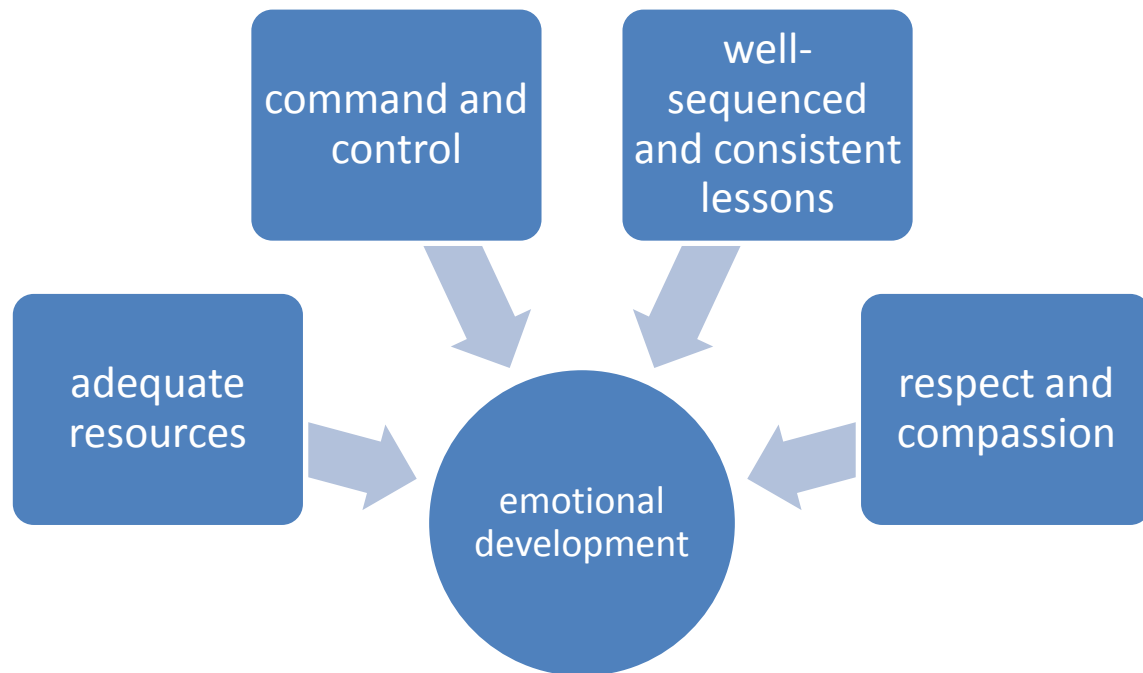
Social Development



- According to regression analysis of observation data, the provision of **adequate resources** and a **well-sequenced lesson with flow and consistency** predicts improved **social development** ($r = .45$; $F = 10.12$; $p < .001$).
- According to regression analysis of teacher survey data, an emphasis on **respect and compassion** and **well-sequenced and consistent TA lessons** predicts improved **social development** ($r = .70$; $F = 55.24$; $p < .001$).

Through analysis of all data, we found a strong, observable, effect on students' development of social skills. Students developed new, mature, relationships with their peers that were reflected in their performance and behavior. According to their teachers, these are effects that should sustain them throughout their schooling and adulthood.

Emotional Development



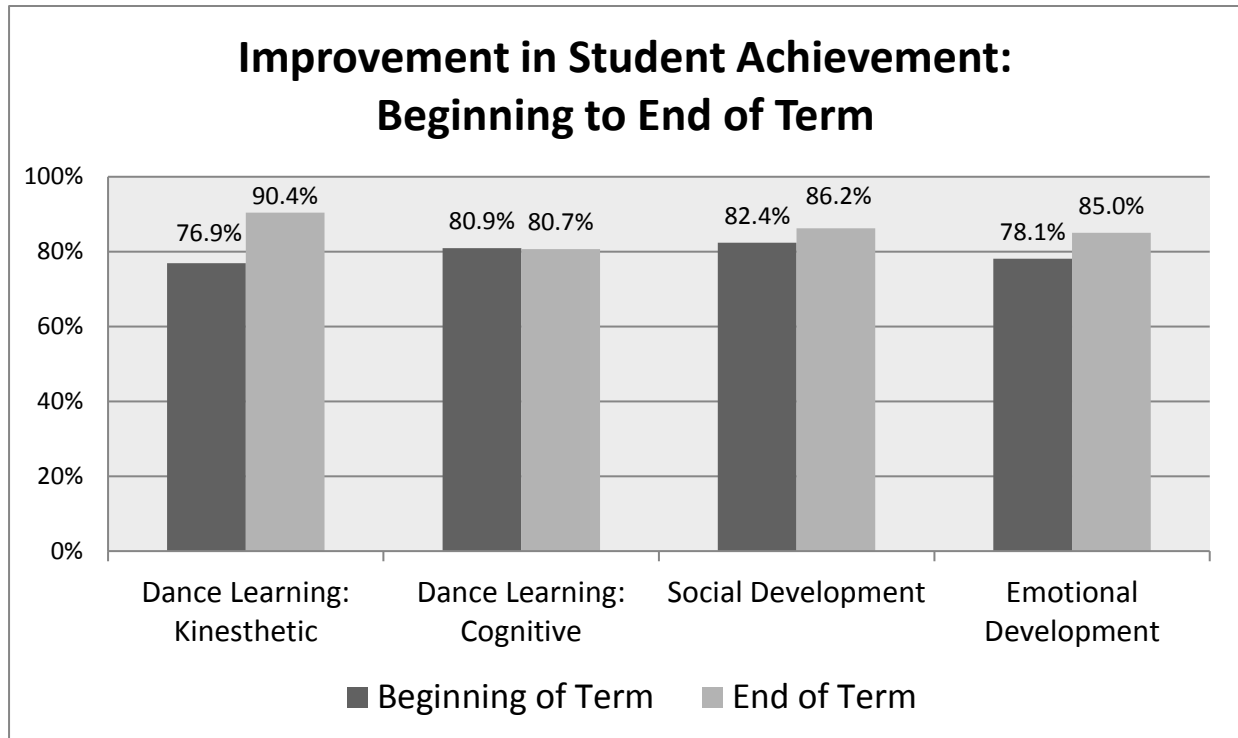
- According to regression analysis of observation data, the provision of **adequate resources** and the teaching artists' **command and control** predicts improved **emotional development** ($r = .41$; $F = 8.00$; $p < .01$).
- According to regression analysis of teacher survey data, **well-sequenced and consistent TA lessons** and an **emphasis on respect and compassion** predicts improved **emotional development** ($r = .67$; $F = 47.15$; $p < .001$).

Through analysis of all data, we found a strong, observable, effect on students' development of emotional skills, with indications of profound growth in many students' perceptions of self. Students developed self-discipline, were engaged and motivated to participate, developed a sense of mastery, and the ability to focus and stay on task. Our observations were consistent with the regression analysis. We conclude that these effects are due to the respectful and compassionate authority of the teaching artists and the well-sequenced instructional method.

Comparative Analysis

Improvement in Student Development – Observation Data

We compared observation ratings on student achievement from the beginning of a term (n = 27) to the end of the same term (n = 33). Ratings increased in kinesthetic dance learning and social-emotional learning.



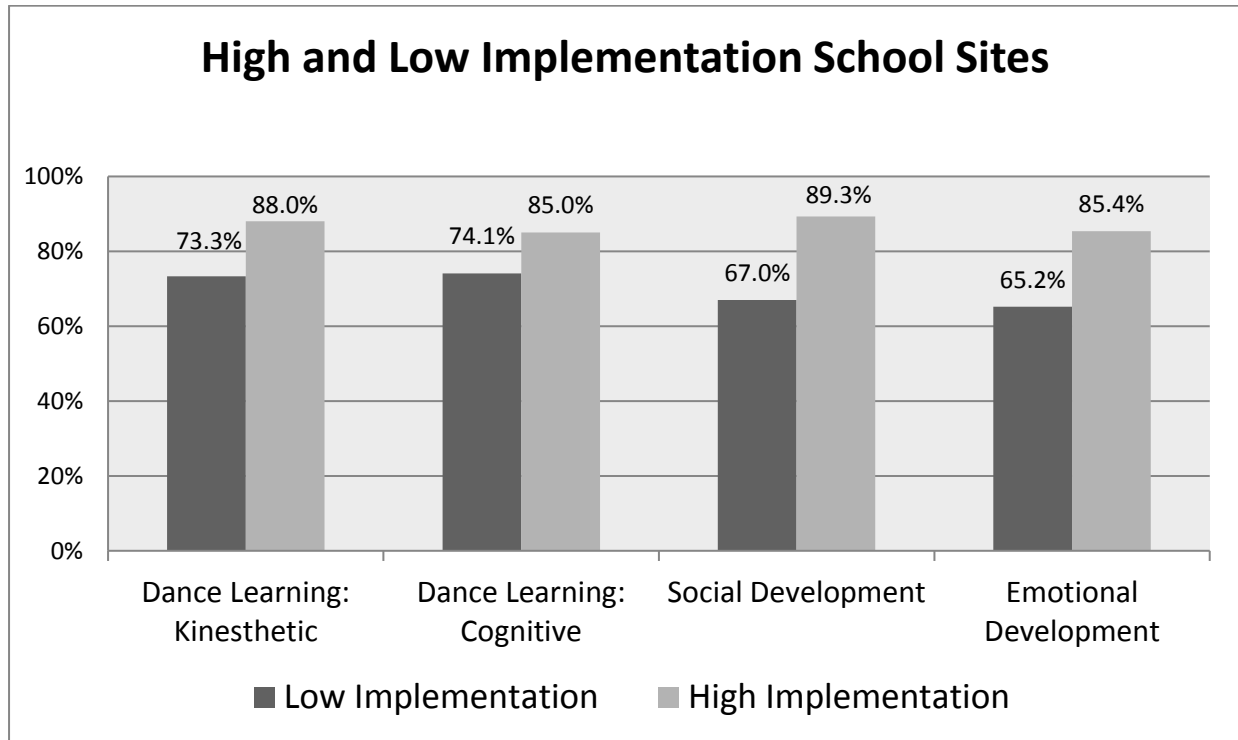
Program Impact – Observation Data

We identified five high-implementation school sites and five low-implementation school sites for repeated observations. School sites were defined as *high-implementation* if the program was supported and implemented in an exemplary manner, through collaborative logistical planning, provision of adequate space, and strong commitment by teachers and administrators. Schools were designated as *low-implementation* if there were indications of inadequate collaboration and school support, and difficulty in scheduling and logistics.

Our field researchers conducted observations in the school sites, but were not aware of their designation as high or low. They observed 34 classes in the “high” school sites and 25 classes in the “low” school sites. Schools and their teachers were also not informed if they were defined as “high” or “low.”

Student development ratings were significantly higher in the high-implementation school sites ($p < .05$) indicating stronger effects when the program is well implemented.

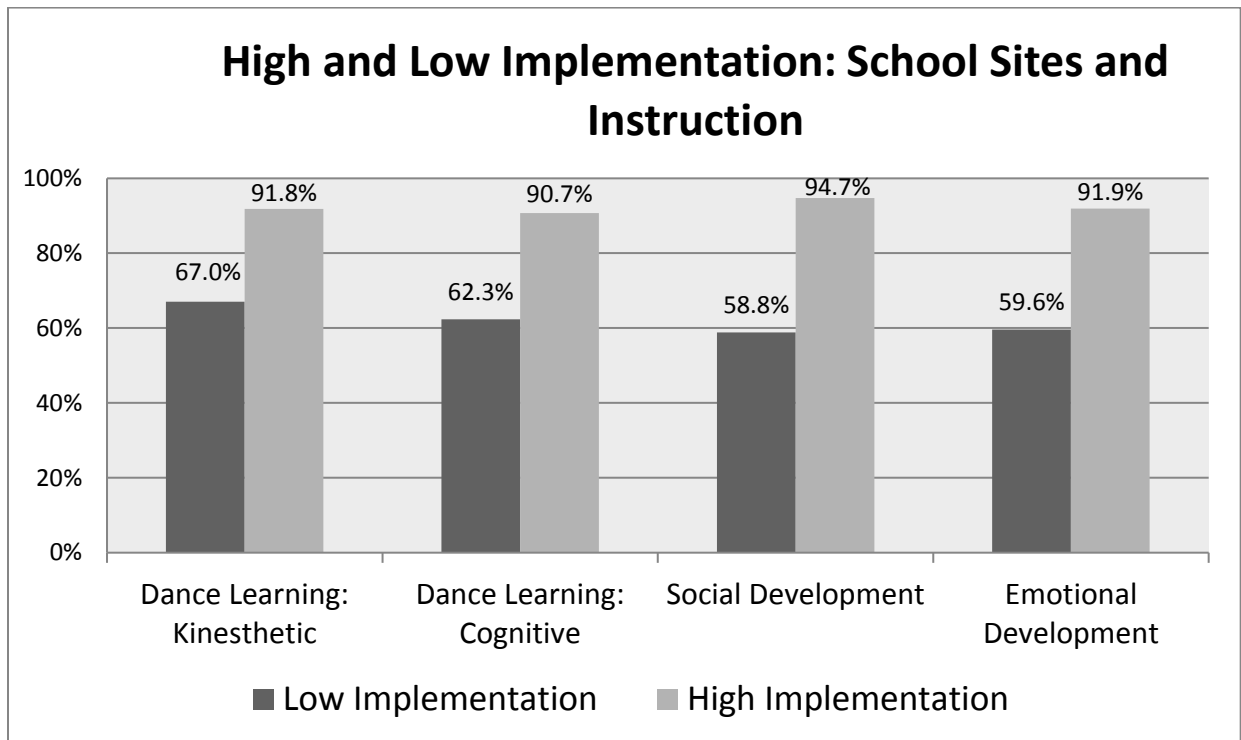
Schools with low implementation had lower ratings across all student outcomes, most significantly in the areas of social and emotional development. In contrast, schools with high implementation had scores above 85% in all categories, most significantly in kinesthetic and social development. However, across all schools the Dancing Classrooms program was shown to favorably impact student outcomes.



The differences were more pronounced when comparing classes in high-implementation school sites that also had exemplary and experienced teaching artists vs. classes in low-implementation school sites taught by less experienced or developing teaching artists.

We conducted one additional analysis, selecting high-implementation school sites that also had “exemplary and experienced” teaching artists and comparing them with low-implementation school sites that also had “less experienced or developing” teaching artists. The categorization of the teaching artists was done by Dancing Classrooms’ staff. Our researchers, the TAs, and the schools were not aware of the TA categorization.

This analysis revealed a sharper contrast between the high and low school sites. Schools with high implementation plus experienced teaching artists show ratings above 91% for all student outcomes, with the strongest effects in social development (94.7%). As in the prior contrast, low-implementation plus low-TA school sites also showed positive effects on student development.



The following table compares observation ratings according to four conditions: (1) high implementation with an experienced and exemplary TA (designated as “high TA”), (2) high implementation with a less experienced and developing TA (designated as “low TA”, (3) low implementation and high TA, (4) low implementation and low TA. The two middle categories of mixed effectiveness have approximately the same ratings. Interestingly, the social-emotional scores are the strongest outcome areas with exemplary conditions, but dance skills tend to be higher than the other areas when there are mixed conditions.

	High Implementation – High TA	High Implementation – Low TA	Low Implementation – High TA	Low Implementation – Low TA
Dance and Kinesthetic Development	91.84%	78.00%	78.68%	67.00%
Dance and Cognitive Development	90.66%	77.78%	81.91%	62.29%
Social Development	94.74%	73.33%	73.21%	58.75%
Emotional Development	91.93%	75.56%	71.79%	59.58%
Total Ratings	92.29%	76.17%	76.40%	61.91%

We can conclude from these last two analyses that the program is effective across varied teaching and school conditions, but that these effects are significantly enhanced with strong school collaboration, and even more so with addition of experienced and exemplary instructors.

Conclusion

Dancing Classrooms is an effective organization that provides high quality dance instruction to New York City's students. The program was well-organized and implemented, with excellent teaching artists and a system of liaisons and administrative staff providing support for logistics and programming.

The implementation of the program was remarkably consistent across diverse school sites through New York City. We conducted 192 classroom observations over two years, documenting teaching artist instructional strategies, and found surprisingly little variation in the application of the Dulaine Method. The teaching artists were effective, well-prepared, and infused their lessons with enthusiasm, joy, humor and professional expertise. The survey and interview data corroborated our observations of the program's successful implementation.

In the view of our research team, the principles of the Dulaine Method were consistent with good teaching practice and would likely benefit all instructional settings. While they are inherent to the Dancing Classrooms pedagogy, surely students of all subjects would benefit from Respect and Compassion and the other instructional principles. Unfortunately, some classrooms deliver a different message to students, often unintentionally, with the current emphasis on high-stakes testing and teacher accountability sometimes overshadowing a humanistic approach based upon students' developmental needs. It is a credit to Dancing Classrooms that they have been able to establish their role in so many school communities with steadfast adherence to their teaching principles. They are viewed by principals and teachers as essential to their school community, providing a necessary artistic and physical outlet.

The positive student outcomes were consistent as well. The effects on students' social-emotional learning were particularly striking, with gains in cooperative and collaborative skills, social confidence, self-discipline and focus, and engagement and motivation. These areas of social-emotional learning closely overlap with CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies, such as social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making.

Our analysis of interviews from Dancing Classrooms programs in Los Angeles and Washington State showed, again, a consistency of program application and effects on students. The implementation of the program was remarkably similar to New York, with some variation according to local needs and resources. Most significant, the programs' teaching artists used the same pedagogy, with adherence to the Dulaine Method, and teachers and principals reported similar effects on their students.

This indicates that the findings in our New York study can apply to other locales, as well. If the program is successfully implemented as intended, then local programs should experience a similar effect on students' of kinesthetic and social-emotional learning.

It would be valuable to test this through a national study, comparing adherence to the Dulaine Method and successful program implementation and student outcomes. A national study could further identify

potential effects on SEL, while also highlighting variations in implementation that may enhance or impede positive effects, such as school collaborations, resources, and teacher participation.

Appendix

Observation Protocol

Our research team used the following observation protocol in winter and spring 2015. It was formatted as an online survey. Researchers took notes during their site observations and then submitted data through our survey software.

Context

1. Researcher
2. School
3. Teacher
4. Artist
5. Date
6. Number of students observed

For items 7 to 20, the researchers estimated the percent of students who demonstrated behaviors pertaining to each student indicator. The researchers chose values from 0% through 100%, at intervals of 10%. Criteria in parentheses were included to guide the researchers' estimates. Researchers also submitted descriptions of student behaviors for each indicator, as an explanation or illustration of their ratings.

Student Indicators – Dance Skills, and Kinesthetic and Cognitive Development through Dance

7. **Demonstrates quality of movement and grace** – (Demonstrates controlled, deliberate, and graceful – “elegant” – movements. Demonstrates attention to producing fluid and aesthetic movements.)
8. **Responds to rhythm and tempo** – (Includes expressing musicality in movement. Includes using physical expression or appropriately elaborating.)
9. **Demonstrates physical coordination, balance and confidence** – (Demonstrates adequate physical coordination and balance generally expected of the age group, and in consideration of developmental or physiological challenges.)
10. **Demonstrates understanding of dance vocabulary** – (Demonstrates comprehension by correctly responding to the teaching artist's directions when she or he uses the dance vocabulary. Students correctly use dance vocabulary when verbally responding to the artist or expressing ideas.)
11. **Applies feedback** – (follows aural feedback/directions and the teaching artist's modeling; applies peer assessment)
12. **Applies observation skills** – (Verbally identifies details; comparing and contrasting. Uses observational and critical skills to talk about dance.)
13. **Learns and recalls choreography, patterns and sequences** – (Physically recalls and replicates the choreography, including details and patterns. Physically demonstrates an understanding of the criteria for performing a particular dance.)
14. **Attention to protocol, routine and structure of dance class**

15. **Problem solving** – (Includes self-assessing and independently improving one’s work.)

Student Indicators – Social Development

16. **Cooperative and collaborative skills** – (Cooperating with partners. Teamwork. Working as an ensemble. Supporting and helping peers.)

17. **Social confidence**

Student Indicators – Emotional Learning and Perceptions of Self

18. Demonstrates self-discipline, focus and task persistence

19. Demonstrates motivation and engagement – (Demonstrates enthusiasm, a desire to excel, and/or curiosity. Demonstrates a sense of joy and fun.)

20. Demonstrates commitment to artistic and aesthetic process (Self-perception as dancer; committed participant beyond minimal class requirements.)

For items 21 to 27, the researchers indicated whether they observed each teaching behavior and classroom condition (“Yes” or “No”). Researchers also submitted qualitative descriptions for each teaching behavior and classroom condition. The first six items in this section refer to the characteristics of the Dulaine Method, and the final item pertains to lesson flow.

Instruction

21. **Demonstrating respect and compassion** – (Teaching artist encourages students to maintain self-respect and respect for others, as well as compassion. TA treats children with respect and demonstrates consideration of a child or young adult's point of view.)

22. **Being present** – (Teaching artist is completely “in the moment” while teaching. Teaching artist notices nuances of individual student and group behavior.)

23. **Creating a safe place** – (Teaching artist intentionally encourages the idea that all participants – adults and students – are learning together as equals; TA intentionally encourages the idea that the workshop is a collective experience. TA tactfully discourages negative behavior such as teasing, bullying, or inappropriately criticizing fellow dancers. TA clarifies social boundaries. TA ensures that the experience is inclusive. For example, the TA finds ways to include students who cannot directly participate in dance, or finds ways to honor differences such as self-ascribed gender identity.)

24. **Asserting command and control of learning environment** – (Teaching artist manages the group from beginning to end by maintaining order and discipline, while at the same time emotionally nurturing the children and young adults. The teaching artist effectively uses group cohesion, shared commitment, and the group’s common goal to support individual students. The TA strategically maintains the students’ focus and attention to protocol.)

25. **Optimizing use of verbal language and body language** – (Teaching artist continuously uses positive comments and encouragement. The TA’s body language also conveys and reinforces positive words of encouragement. TA uses appropriate tone of voice.)

26. **Creating and setting the tone** – (Teaching artist effuses genuine joy, energy, and elegance. TA employs humor with sensitivity. TA uses positive reinforcement.)
27. **Maintaining flow and consistency of the lesson** – (Teaching artist paces the lesson well.)

School Conditions

28. **Teaching environment** – (There is adequate space for a dance class. The space is adequately clean and uncluttered. The noise level and distractions are reasonably controlled or minimal.)
29. **Adequate resources** – (The teaching artist has access to necessary resources such as audio equipment and power outlets that work.)
30. **Classroom teacher participation and support** – (Teachers who are physically able actively participate alongside students. Teachers respect the teaching artist's role and approach to behavior management and instruction. Teachers support the TA's authority in the workshop environment.)

Open-Ended Items

31. **Description of class activities and sequence**
32. **Additional comments on teaching**
33. **Additional comments on student learning or participation**
34. **Other comments or personal evaluation**

Dancing Classrooms Study Variables Draft Winter 2014

This draft outline was developed at the outset of the study to identify potential indicators of student outcomes, characteristics of the program that might lead to successful outcomes, and the contextual issues that could affect successful implementation. We used the outline to develop surveys, observation protocols and interview questions, and to develop our overall evaluation design. The outline was refined throughout the research process. A simplified version was used to code our qualitative data.

1. Context

- 1.1. School conditions, size, funding, type
- 1.2. Students' prior experiences
- 1.3. NYC education policy
- 1.4. Common Core
- 1.5. Blueprint for the Arts

2. Implementation and partnership issues

- 2.1. Collaboration, Responsiveness, Communication
 - 2.1.1. Collaboration and communication between schools and DC
 - 2.1.2. Collaboration and communication between teachers and artists
 - 2.1.3. Alignment with overall school goals
 - 2.1.4. Involvement or inclusion of school arts staff
 - 2.1.5. Administrative support
- 2.2. Planning
- 2.3. Scheduling
- 2.4. Instruction
 - 2.4.1. Strategies for connecting or "integrating" DC and academic curricula
 - 2.4.2. Alignment with academic standards
 - 2.4.3. Alignment with arts standards and Blueprint
- 2.5. Funding (i.e. assistance paying for the program)
- 2.6. Challenges and Obstacles (e.g. space, sound equipment)

3. Instruction

- 3.1. The Dulaine Method
 - 3.1.1. Respect and compassion
 - 3.1.2. Being present
 - 3.1.3. Creating a safe place
 - 3.1.4. Command and control
 - 3.1.5. Language – body and verbal
 - 3.1.6. Humor and joy
- 3.2. Other instructional characteristics
 - 3.2.1. Setting and tone (effusing humor, joy, energy, elegance)
 - 3.2.2. Flow and consistency of the lesson
 - 3.2.3. Using positive reinforcement
 - 3.2.4. Being in the moment
 - 3.2.5. Creating an emotionally safe, low-risk environment
 - 3.2.6. Demonstrating sensitivity to the individual/Using the group to support the individual
- 3.3. Teaching artists

- 3.3.1. Professional development of teaching artists
- 3.3.2. Mentoring and classroom support

4. Student learning and development

- 4.1. Dance learning
 - 4.1.1. Understanding the history and culture of ballroom dancing
 - 4.1.2. Understanding and using dance vocabulary
 - 4.1.3. Developing skills in specific dances
 - 4.1.4. Learning and recalling choreography
 - 4.1.5. Developing physical coordination and confidence
 - 4.1.6. Responding to instructions and applying feedback
 - 4.1.7. Quality of movement
 - 4.1.8. Responding to rhythm and tempo
 - 4.1.9. Expressing the mood or style of a dance
 - 4.1.10. Demonstrating coordination
 - 4.1.11. Using physical expression or appropriately elaborating
- 4.2. Cognitive competencies
 - 4.2.1. Applying observation skills (e.g. identifying details, comparing and contrasting)
 - 4.2.2. Attention to protocol, routine, structure
 - 4.2.3. Problem solving
- 4.3. Social development
 - 4.3.1. Cooperating with a partner, teamwork
 - 4.3.2. Supporting and helping peers
 - 4.3.3. Developing social confidence
 - 4.3.4. Demonstrating new or better relationships with teachers
- 4.4. Personal development and self-perceptions
 - 4.4.1. Demonstrating self-discipline and self-control
 - 4.4.2. Demonstrating self-confidence or self-efficacy (e.g. volunteering, taking initiative)
 - 4.4.3. Demonstrating a sense of mastery or achievement
 - 4.4.4. Motivation and engagement (e.g. enthusiasm, desire to excel, curiosity)
 - 4.4.5. Task persistence and focus
 - 4.4.6. Demonstrating joy, sense of fun
- 4.5. Academic learning
 - 4.5.1. Academic curriculum connections or academic enrichment
 - 4.5.2. Supporting students with special needs
 - 4.5.3. Supporting ELLs

5. School change

- 5.1. School climate
- 5.2. Student relationships (e.g. anti-bullying, tolerance, respect, compassion, inclusion)
- 5.3. Student-teacher relationships
- 5.4. Presence of arts in schools
- 5.5. Longevity of impact on students
- 5.6. Parent/guardian involvement and engagement