



National Dance Institute of New Mexico Programs Impact Students' Attitudes Toward Physical Fitness

This brief presents selected findings from the Year 1 RMC Research evaluation report, based on data collected during the 2005-2006 school year.

National Dance Institute of New Mexico

The National Dance Institute of New Mexico (NDI-NM) was founded in 1995 with the knowledge that the arts have a unique power to engage and motivate children. The purpose of NDI-NM programs is to help children develop discipline, a standard of excellence, and a belief in themselves that will carry over into all aspects of their lives. In the 2005-2006 school year, NDI-NM programs served 5,600 children in communities throughout the state of New Mexico.

NDI-NM contracted with RMC Research Corporation to conduct a 5-year evaluation of its in-school (Outreach) programs and Advanced Training programs in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and northern New Mexico, and 2-to-3 week residency programs throughout the state. In 2005-2006, data were collected from 2,700 students, 129 classroom teachers, 19 principals, 95 parents, and 15 NDI-NM program staff and were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Selected Findings

NDI-NM programs were found to have the following positive impacts:

- **Student ratings of attitudes toward physical fitness and dance increased over time.**

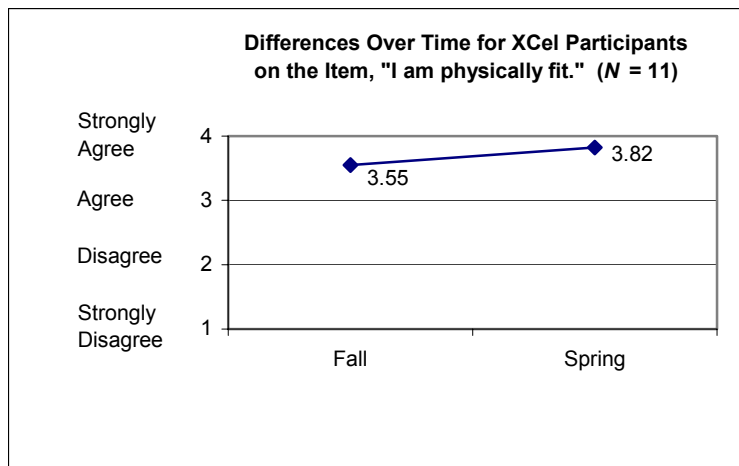
I felt really healthy, active, fit, and excited to be participating.
- Student

Students who participated in the 30-week in-school program also showed increases for healthy risk taking (i.e., willingness to try something new) from fall 2005 to spring 2006.

- **Student ratings of feeling physically fit increased over time.** This was particularly evident for students in the 30-week in-school program. These students also showed increases from fall 2005 to spring 2006 for self-reported acquisition of fitness and dance skills.
- **The more time students spent in the program, the more they reported enjoying NDI-NM and the more they felt a sense of social connectedness.** Student ratings on measures of engagement and social connectedness were highest for the 30-week program.

- **Students in the NDI-NM Advanced Training Program reported increased levels of self-confidence and teamwork skills.** High school aged students in the Advanced Training

Program in Santa Fe showed strong increases on several items related to persistence, working hard to do one's best, and self-reporting of physical fitness.



I feel I can believe in myself and set my mind to do anything I want to. I am confident in myself. - Student

- **Principal and teacher ratings of satisfaction with aspects of NDI-NM programming were very positive.** Principals liked the highly structured approach and the discipline and

Students learned to be disciplined, develop good listening skills, follow directions, cooperate, stay focused, and they learn to take pride in themselves and all they can accomplish. – Teacher

responsibility the program engendered. Teachers noted that NDI-NM had a positive impact on ability of students to work together as a team, their sense of self discipline and increased self-confidence.

- **NDI-NM experiences were viewed by classroom teachers as complementary to academics and connected to New Mexico State Standards.** Teachers were more likely to report that NDI-NM goals matched those for physical education, the arts, and health education.

- **Parents of Advanced Training students strongly agreed that their children enjoyed participating in NDI-NM programs.** Survey results indicated that parents strongly agreed

The NDI-NM program brought so much happiness and fun into the life of my son. His self-esteem was boosted and he developed so much self-confidence. He became aware about eating well and exercising. He enjoyed being with all his teachers and instructors and friends. NDI has been a great program for my son and for me. – Parent

that their children developed positive attitudes toward fitness, become better at positive risk-taking, and gained teamwork skills as a result of their participation.

1512 Larimer Street ▲ Suite 540 ▲ Denver, Colorado 80202

800-922-3636 ▲ 303-825-3636 ▲ Fax: 303-825-1626

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