

Program 6: Fostering Genuine Communication

Dance

SEGMENT 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mary Harding
14 years teaching

Jennifer Rice Brandt
11 years teaching

About the School

Arts High School

Perpich Center for Arts Education
Golden Valley, MN

Type:

Statewide residential program/
Arts-focused public high school

Grades:

11-12

Students:

300
Very mixed socio-economic status

Majors:

Dance, Literary Arts, Media Arts, Music,
Theatre, and Visual Art

About the Dance Program

Faculty:

2 full-time

Students:

20-30 dance majors + 75 non-majors

Facilities:

Above Average in the Area

- 1 large studio
- 2 locker rooms
- 120-seat black box theatre

Focus:

Modern dance-based ensemble program
that welcomes dancers with developed
talent as well as potential

Required Courses:

Ballet Technique, Composition,
Improvisation, Dance History, Dance
Criticism, Career Explorations, Anatomy
and Somatics, Music for Dance,
Repertory, Guest Artist Residency,
Conditioning, Yoga, and Jazz

Elective Courses:

Modern Dance, Arts Improvisation, Arts
and Ideas, Moving Anatomy, Viewpoints
in Dance and Theatre, and Drumming

Audition

Movement class, interview, and an arts-
oriented assignment. Prior to the
audition, each student is sent a list of 5
words and asked to bring in a new,
original artwork related to those words.
Dancers must present a short solo in any
style.

About the Featured Class

**Body Image/Sign Language
Project (for dance majors):**

Students participate in a series of
classes that combine sign language
and elements of abstraction to
generate movement material for
choreography.

Student Motivation:

Mixed. Some dancers lose their
motivation when they work on more
abstract dances. Others lose their
motivation as they realize that this is
not the field for them.

Student Level:

Mixed. Student backgrounds vary
widely. Some have just started their
dance education, while others have
been dancing for ten years or more.

In the Teacher's Words***How do you and Jennifer
find time to plan and teach
together?***

*Mary Harding: Jennifer and I
have time during August planning
sessions to get the big ideas
worked out. Then it is catch as
catch can once we start teaching.
The actual teaching schedule is
fairly simple since the academic
teachers teach in the morning
and the arts classes take place in
the afternoon. This schedule
frees us to go into each other's
classrooms for projects like this.*