

Alief ISD Education Foundation
2015 Innovative Education Grant Request for Proposal

ALIEF ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANT EVALUATION FORM

Due June 3, 2016

(Please Type)

Title of Grant: The Choral Music Program: Using the Mirror Neuron System In The Choir Classroom To Improve Problem Solving and Mental Mathematics Skills

School: Miller Intermediate Subject Area: Choir and General Music

Individual Submitting Evaluation: Mary Edwards

To ensure that Alief ISD Education Foundation Innovative grant funds continue to enhance, promote, and augment classroom instruction as well as address unique needs of our school campuses. Please answer the following question:

Was this grant project worthwhile?

Yes this grant project was worthwhile, because it gave my students a new and effective method to enhance learning their music in choir rehearsals.

How did your grant project impact the children it served?

Using the mirror neuron system engaged my students more by allowing them to be more attentive and focused (in class and after-school rehearsals), to my conducting gestures and body language.

The students were able to mirror back to me what I demonstrated to them, and to transfer that "visual" information into the performances. I became more deliberate and precise in mirroring to them the exact actions I needed, to aid them in producing the dynamics, expressions and emotions required to perform the songs.

It was also one of the factors that contributed to our scoring "superior" ratings (both 5th & 6th grade Honor Choir), at our first Contest in which we participated on October 24, 2015 at the Alief Solo and Ensemble Contest at Alief Middle School.

What were your stated goals? Did you achieve your stated goal(s)? If not, why not?

Goal 1: During the Fall 2015 semester, students enrolled in choir class will develop problem solving skills through score analysis, music reading skills (mental skills), through classroom packets which include music theory symbols and objects; and through using the Kodaly system, Curwen hand signs and through technology-based rhythm practice exercises and scores of music.

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Goal 1 continued:

We made progress in the first semester toward achieving our stated goals in that:

- 1. During the first semester, six out of eleven classes showed an increase in choir classroom test scores, which transferred to their sight-reading ability to analyze their music scores and determined measures to practice.*

5th Grade (3 classes) 25%

6th Grade (3 classes) 33%

The choir students used their problem solving skills to analyze the rhythms in the measures, and they used mental mathematics skills to practice the music using numbers and clapping the rhythms.

Students were also assessed through technology applications, such as:

- 1. Music Tutor-which is a music foundation game, which challenges students in quickly and accurately naming line and space notes of the treble and bass clefs.*
- 2. Rhythm Teacher and Rhythm Tap-are both foundation games, which challenge students in tapping rhythms in various time signatures. Students read note and rest values in the exercises and determine quickly through mental mathematics skills, the values of each note or rest.*

These games were used to give the students extra practice in reading rhythms in music scores for performance.

Goal 2: During the Spring 2016 semester, students enrolled in choir class will continue the skills learned and transfer the skills and knowledge gained through problem solving skills and music reading skills learned in the first semester, to demonstrated their performance skills in off-campus Festivals and Contests.

We made progress in the first semester toward achieving our stated goals in that:

- 1. During the Spring 2016 semester, ten out of twelve classes showed an increase in their DCA test scores.*

5th Grade (6 classes) 59%

6th Grade (4 classes) 45%

The choir students continued to use their sight-reading skills and the mirror neuron system, to imitate the non-verbal messages and to imitate the vocal concepts I demonstrated to them through my conducting gestures. This process resulted in more expression and emotion exhibited in their performances.

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Would you recommend these materials/techniques to be requested for other classrooms?

Once I have had more time to work with my choirs in moving from understanding actions in music, and more time in interpreting human intention as it relates to rehearsal practices and performance, I would recommend these materials/technologies to be requested for other classrooms. Although we have made real progress in our performances and in my students' growth and development in choir this school year, I would like to spend more time working with the actual Mirror Neuron System itself. There is still so much more to explore through all aspects of this system.

I will use next school year to continue using the mirror neuron system to transfer the visual information I give to my students (through body language and conducting gestures), to continue to help them transform that visual information into knowledge through their performances.

Again, thank you so much for the opportunity you have given me in using the Mirror Neuron System in my choir classroom, through the 2015 Innovative Education Grant you awarded me.

Please use this evaluation form when submitting your evaluation report at the end of the grant cycle.

Attach any pictures or data that supports the success of your program.