



School in the Park Evaluation

Prepared for Price Philanthropies

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INTRODUCTION

School in the Park (SITP) is a museum-based, experiential learning program funded by Price Philanthropies. The program, in its sixteenth year, aims to blend formal and informal learning, drawing on the unique collection of museums and educational institutions in Balboa Park, San Diego, California. SITP weeks include exhibits, experiential learning activities, teacher and museum educator co-taught lessons, and individual and group projects. SITP is intended to improve academic achievement as well as increase numerous positive attitudes in participating students (i.e., civic responsibility, curiosity to learn, etc.).

Additionally, SITP funders and program staff offer the program with the intent of providing increased access to opportunities and enrichment that might not otherwise be

available. To this end, SITP is part of a larger initiative to provide opportunities for City Heights youth and families.

City Heights is an urban community east of downtown San Diego consisting of 16 defined neighborhoods within a four-square mile area. With approximately 74,000 people, City Heights is the most densely populated community in the San Diego region. Forty-two percent of residents are foreign born with many immigrating from Latin America, Asia and West Africa; 63% of adults have a high school diploma. About a third are not English fluent, and 27% live in poverty.

Several elementary and middle schools in the City Heights area participate in SITP. This evaluation focuses specifically on the program provided to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade



students from Rosa Parks Elementary School. Students from Rosa Parks have consistently participated in the program each year since its inception.

In May 2013, Price Philanthropies began working with Vital Research to evaluate SITP at Rosa Parks. Specifically, during the 2013/14 school year, a quasi-experimental outcomes evaluation was planned and implemented that involved academic assessment and student attitudinal survey data. The primary goal of the research was to determine whether there would be differences between participating students from Rosa Parks and control students (Rosa Parks students remaining in the traditional classroom setting throughout the academic year) on math performance, English language arts (ELA) performance, and attitudinal and behavioral measures. The attitudinal and behavioral measures assessed constructs such as character, competence, curiosity, and confidence – the “4Cs” often mentioned by the founder of the program, Sol Price, as values underlying the SITP program.

Findings from the outcomes evaluation indicated that 5th grade students who attended School in the Park scored statistically significantly higher than did students who did not attend School in the Park on the math assessment (29% correct compared to 25% correct). For all other grades and subjects, students that attended School in the Park performed equally well as their control counterparts in the traditional classroom setting. On the student attitudinal survey, there were no significant differences between SITP students and control students. With

respect to the student attitudinal survey, Rosa Parks has been affiliated with SITP for fifteen years. Moreover, 4th and 5th grade control students had participated in SITP in previous years. It is likely that the larger school community has been influenced by its long-term involvement, resulting in a culture that already promotes the 4Cs.

For the 2014/2015 school year, it was determined that a comprehensive implementation and impact evaluation of the SITP program was warranted for two reasons. First, the findings from the outcomes evaluation were positive, but the focus of the study was narrow. Price Philanthropies and SITP staff agreed there was interest in an in-depth impact evaluation that might uncover both intended and unintended impacts of the program. Second, for the 2014/15 school year, the implementation model for the program was substantially changed. In previous school years, the program occurred at Balboa Park for the entire school day; for 2014/15, an extended day model was implemented in which students arrived at SITP at noon and stayed until 4:00pm. The new model was intended to provide additional time in the traditional classroom setting for core instruction. Thus, Price Philanthropies and SITP staff were interested in learning more about the implementation of the extended day model and areas for improvement.

Taken together, the findings from the initial outcomes evaluation and new information needs for 2014/15 resulted in a comprehensive evaluation that was intended to address the following evaluation questions:

- 1 How satisfied were students and parents with implementation of the program?
- 2 What were the challenges to implementation? What were the benefits of the extended day model?
- 3 What were the overall impacts of SITP on participating students?

METHODS

In the 2014/15 school year, during which this evaluation occurred, Rosa Parks students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade spent a total of eight weeks scattered throughout the year at SITP. There were a total of 438 students, in 17 classes that participated in this study. Of the participating students, about half (49%) were female, 15% were in Special Education, and 59% were designated as English Learners (EL). The majority of the students were identified as Hispanic (79%).

A total of nine museums at Balboa Park participate in SITP. These include: the San

Diego Zoo, Museum of Art, History Center, Natural History Museum, Museum of Man, Junior Theatre, Air and Space Museum, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, and the Old Globe.

Third grade units for SITP included visits to the Zoo, Museum of Art, History Center, Junior Theatre, and Museum of Man. Fourth grade units included visits to the Zoo, Junior Theatre, Natural History Museum, Air and Space Museum, Museum of Art, and the Fleet Science Center. Fifth grade units included visits to the Zoo, Air and Space Museum, Museum of Art, Old Globe, and the Fleet Science Center. Across grade levels, there were a total of 22 SITP units. All but two were one-week units; units at the Air and Space in 4th grade and the Old Globe in 5th grade lasted for two weeks.

PARTICIPANTS AND DATA SOURCES

In order to answer the evaluation questions, a mixed-method design was employed. Table 1 provides an overview of data collection methods and sources used to answer the

TABLE 1. DATA SOURCES

Evaluation Question	Museum Obs.	Student Focus Groups	Interviews	Student Survey	Parent Survey	Teacher Survey
Satisfaction		X		X	X	
Implementation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Perceived Impacts	X	X	X	X	X	X

evaluation questions stated in the introduction.

Museum Observations

For one week in November 2014 and one week in March 2015, a team of 3-4 evaluators conducted extensive, in-depth observations of 11 classes/units across eight of nine museums participating in SITP (See Table 2).

TABLE 2. MUSEUM OBSERVATIONS

Fall 2014		
Air & Space	4 th	Forces & Energy-Week 1
Junior Theatre	4 th	The Gold Rush
Museum of Man	3 rd	Who are the Kumeyaay?
Old Globe	5 th	Macbeth-Week 1
Zoo	3 rd	Animal Classifications
Spring 2015		
History Center	3 rd	Mapping Balboa Park
Fleet Science Center	5 th	Forensics Science
Junior Theatre	3 rd	Tall Tales
Museum of Art	5 th	Renaissance Art
Old Globe	5 th	Macbeth-Week 2
Zoo	4 th	Senses and Survival

The purpose of these observations was to learn more about the implementation of SITP, as well as the intended and unintended impact of the program on students. The weeks chosen for observations were selected with the intent of observing as many different museum/grade level combinations as possible during the two weeks designated for observations. With the exception of the Natural History Museum, at least one SITP unit was observed at each participating museum. Researchers were unable to study the Natural History Museum due to scheduling; the unit was not offered to Rosa Parks students in the weeks that site visits occurred. Observations were evenly distributed across grade level (3rd grade – 4

units, 4th grade – 3 units, 5th grade – 4 units). An observation protocol was developed and used by the evaluation team to ensure consistency of observations, and team members were trained prior to data collection. Each weekly unit was observed by a minimum of two researchers.

Student Focus Groups

Eleven focus groups, one for each unit that was observed, were conducted with approximately 5-8 participating students per class to learn more about student satisfaction with and perceived impacts of the program. Students were also asked for feedback on the implementation of the program. In these focus groups, students were asked about their general satisfaction with the program, ideas for what might make the program better, and what they had learned about during their time at SITP, and their career interests.

When each focus group began, students were also asked to draw a picture illustrating something they had learned that week at SITP. Students were provided paper, crayons, and markers; the activity was used to make students feel more comfortable, establish rapport, and help them recall details regarding SITP units. The pictures students produced during focus group are included throughout this report.

Teacher Survey

In spring 2015, a teacher survey was administered online to learn more about the alignment of the SITP and grade level curriculum, student engagement with the

SITP curriculum, perceived impacts, and potential areas for improvement. Fifteen of 17 teachers responded to the survey (Response rate: 88%; 3rd grade – 5 4th grade – 4; 5th grade – 6).

Student Survey

A student survey was administered to all participating Rosa Parks Elementary students in March 2015 to learn more about general student satisfaction with the program, perceived impacts, and potential areas for improvement. A total of 424 students (of a possible 438, a 97% response rate) completed the survey (3rd grade – 119, 4th grade – 160, 5th grade – 145).

Parent Survey

In March 2015, a parent survey was also administered to all parents of participating students to learn more about general program satisfaction, perceived impacts, and potential areas for improvement. Surveys, along with prepaid business reply envelopes were sent home with students. Surveys were available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Reminders to complete and return the survey were sent by the Rosa Parks family resource teacher to encourage parent participation. A total of 91 parents responded to the survey (English – 37, Spanish – 49, Vietnamese – 5). Open-ended responses in Spanish and Vietnamese were translated into English for analysis by a translation service. In this

report, any quotes from parents that were translated will be indicated with “SP” for Spanish and “V” for Vietnamese.

Interviews

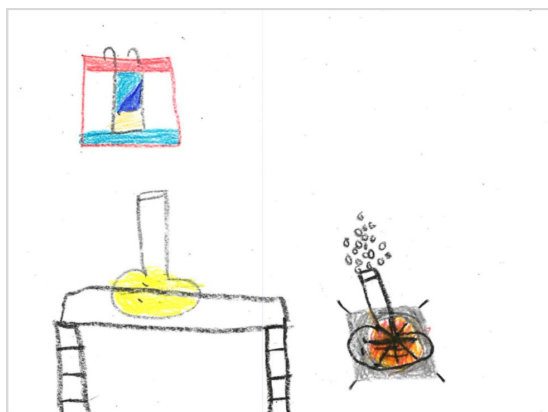
During the fall and spring, a purposeful sample of interviews were conducted with program stakeholders, including SITP staff, museum educators, and Rosa Park teachers to learn more about extended day model implementation, program satisfaction, perceived impact, lessons learned and areas

for improvement. The museum educators and classroom teachers that were involved with the units being observed were interviewed one-on-one in order to triangulate findings from the observations and the student focus groups. A total of 11 (out of 17)

teachers, 12 museum educators (from eight of the nine museums) and 11 SITP staff members were interviewed overall.

DATA ANALYSIS

All qualitative data from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations were content analyzed. All quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software; descriptive statistics were generated for each item.



FINDINGS

EQ 1. HOW SATISFIED WERE STUDENTS AND PARENTS WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM?

Overall, students at Rosa Parks Elementary School and their parents were extremely satisfied with the SITP program. In the student survey, participating students were asked to indicate how much they liked learning about the various topics provided at each Balboa Park institution on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = not at all, 2 = sort of, 3 = a lot). Overall, students highly enjoyed the topics they learned about with mean scores ranging from 2.49 to 2.88 (see Table 3).

In addition to rating how much they liked learning about the topics for each individual SITP unit, on the student survey, participating students were also asked to identify the one week they liked most at SITP. Not surprisingly, students' responses were aligned with topics that they most enjoyed learning about.

- In 3rd grade, 60 students (just over 50%) indicated that their favorite week was Tall Tales at the Junior Theatre.
- In 4th grade, the Junior Theatre week on the Gold Rush also received the highest percentage of student responses (28% of students).

TABLE 3. HOW MUCH DO YOU ENJOY LEARNING ABOUT THE FOLLOWING TOPICS?

	N	Mean (1-3)
3rd Grade Curriculum*		
History Center - mapping Balboa Park	96	2.83
Junior Theatre - tall tales	100	2.78
Zoo - animal classifications	112	2.75
Zoo - habitats, ecology, conservation	71	2.73
History Center - Balboa Park history makers	114	2.72
Zoo - animal adaptations/traits	110	2.67
Museum of Man - Kumeyaay	98	2.63
4th Grade Curriculum**		
Zoo - animal senses and survival	56	2.88
Junior Theatre - Gold Rush	98	2.86
Natural History - fossils	134	2.78
Air & Space - energy forces and engineering (2 week unit)	108	2.76
Museum of Art - Silk Road	92	2.63
Fleet - electricity	148	2.55
5th Grade Curriculum		
Old Globe - Macbeth (2 week unit)	67	2.76
Museum of Art - Renaissance art	138	2.70
Air & Space - glider experiment	102	2.67
Zoo - animal food chain	111	2.66
Fleet - solar system	132	2.58
Air & Space - solar system	136	2.57
Fleet - forensic science	95	2.49

*The Museum of Art - elements of art was not included because too few classes had visited prior to survey administration.

**The History Center - Great Depression and WPA's impact was not included because too few classes had visited prior to the survey administration.

However, units at the Zoo and the Air & Space museum were also chosen often (20% of students).

- In 5th grade, students commonly chose the units on Renaissance Art at the Museum of Art (30% of students) and Macbeth at the Old Globe (22% of students).

When given the opportunity to explain why a given unit was chosen as their favorite, two reasons stated by students were particularly salient: 1) it was fun, and 2) there was a particular curricular element - a specific project, experiment, activity, etc. – that resonated with the student. More specifically, projects and activities that involved performing and/or hands-on learning were

associated with high student satisfaction.

For instance, students who chose the Junior Theatre week as their favorite often mentioned performing, singing, dancing and acting as reasons why they chose that week. One student said, “I circled the Junior Theatre because I loved how we sang, dance, performed and acted.” Another student said, “[I] circled the Junior Theatre because we get to act, dance, sing, [and play] really fun games with Mr. Blake.” A third student stated, “I circled California Gold Rush at the Junior Theatre because we danced, got to be actors and learn about our characters.” Similarly, students who chose the unit on Macbeth at the Old Globe also mentioned performing as the primary reason why they



chose that week. As one student said, “I circled performing Macbeth because we got to perform for our parents.” Another said, “I circled Macbeth, performing in the Old Globe, because it was so much fun.”

Students who chose units at the Air & Space Museum, Museum of Art, Fleet, Natural History Museum, Museum of Man, Zoo and History Center as their favorites did so often because of the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities. For example, at the Air & Space Museum, students mentioned specific activities such as the rollercoaster, engineering a space capsule, building rovers, and the Mission to Mars. At the Museum of Art, the opportunity to create cathedrals resonated with students. For example, one student said, “I liked that week because we got to paint, we got to make altar pieces and got to make cathedrals and also got to make facades.”

As another measure of satisfaction, on the student survey, participating students were asked to identify one place at Balboa Park that they would share with their family. The most common response (34% of students overall) across all grade levels was the Zoo (44% of 3rd graders; 28% of 4th graders; 34% of 5th graders). Other top responses were the Junior Theatre (3rd and 4th graders), Air and Space Museum (4th graders), Fleet Science Center (4th and 5th graders), Old Globe Theater (5th graders), and the Museum of Art (5th graders).

Results from the parent survey suggest that parents were also pleased with the SITP program. On the parent survey, 93% of

parents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the program. Almost all (98%) parents indicated that their children enjoyed going to SITP. Moreover, a vast majority (90%) of parents also said that their students are talking about SITP when they are at home.

Parents identified three primary reasons for being satisfied with SITP: 1) their children are learning new things, have new opportunities for learning, and are excited about what they are learning, 2) their children like the activities and projects that are part of SITP, and 3) participating in SITP was fun for their child. Sample comments from parents regarding their high satisfaction can be found in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. PARENTS' RESPONSES REGARDING THEIR SATISFACTION

My son says he likes to go [to SITP] because he sees and learns new or different things and practices. (SP)

[My children like going to SITP] because they have fun, they learn from the stories and they like the different activities they have each time they go to SITP. (SP)

He always looks forward to this week and learning about the different topics. He likes explaining the park and telling us where he went.

[My child] seems more happy than usual when coming home from SITP.

I like that programs like these exist and that they take interest in children who don't have the resources at their schools to be better able to understand all the teachings at school. (SP)

EQ 2: WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION? WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS OF THE EXTENDED DAY MODEL?

Challenges

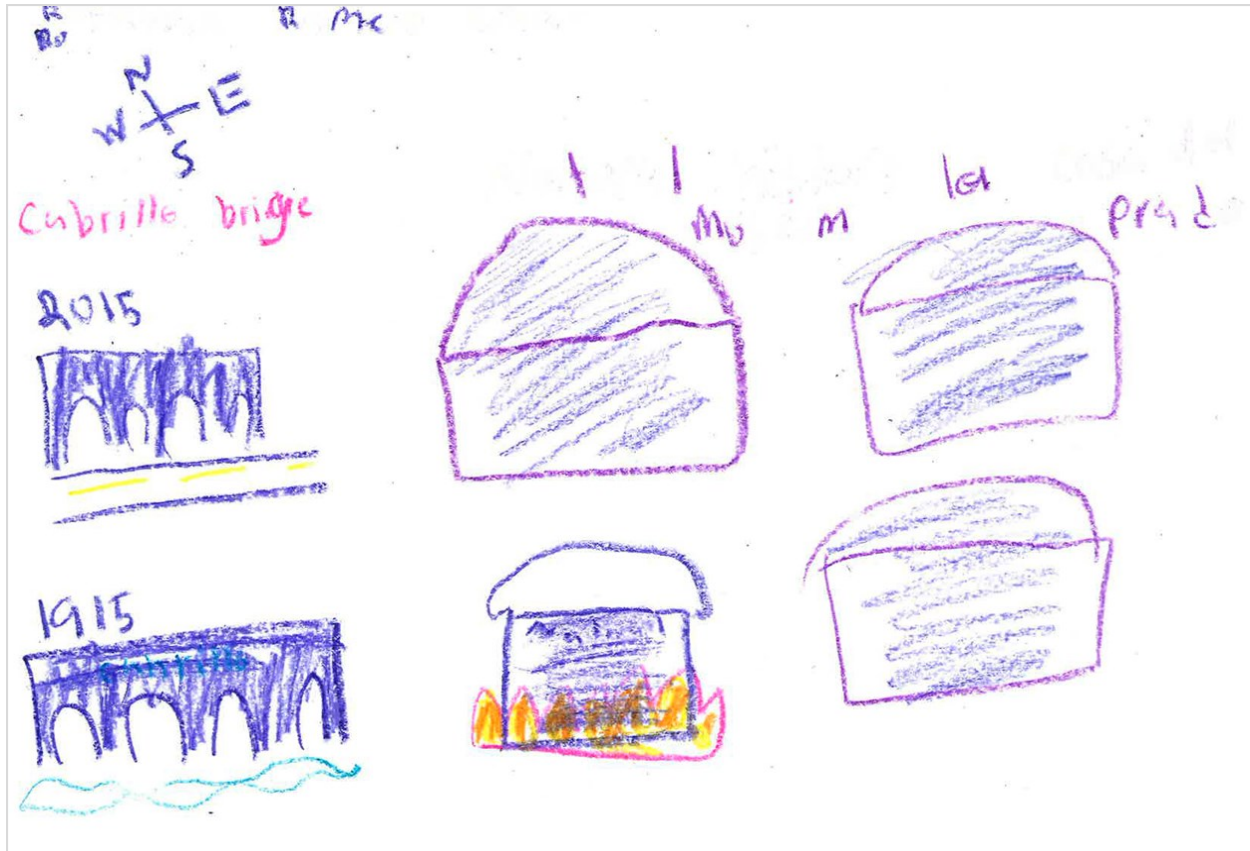
While parents and students were extremely satisfied with the SITP program, analysis of interviews and surveys findings identified three core challenges to implementation: 1) The role of the teacher; 2) Length of the day; and 3) Instructional and curricular challenges.

The role of the teacher

Both museum educators and teachers discussed the need to clarify the role of the teacher in the program. Initially, teachers felt

they received mixed messages regarding how and to what extent they should be involved in the program, particularly after the end of the official school day. Teachers and museum educators also noted that at times, they were unsure how much co-teaching should occur with the new extended day model. For example, one teacher said, "It's just been hard... I really like the model that we did before which was early in the morning. It just gave you more of an opportunity to do more observation [of museum educators] and more





of the team teaching.” In fact, the role of the teacher varied considerably depending on the museum, the grade-level, and the teacher.

Moreover, several teachers were unable to stay past the end of the official school day. There were multiple consequences to leaving prior to program end: 1) It disrupted the program when teachers left abruptly; 2) Students were less well behaved when their teacher was not present; 3) Teachers were unaware of what their students were learning in the later afternoon hours; and 4) Students felt disconnected from their teachers. With regard to student behavior, one museum educator said, “[Student] behavior visibly declines as soon as the teacher walks out the door. It doesn’t matter how great the class is. It’s just much harder to rein them in and that just gets in the

way.” Another museum educator explained, “After the teacher leaves, it’s a bit like wrangling monkeys. It’s like wrangling cats. Then we have to slow down and take transitions slower and do them often and do them multiple times. It takes away from what we can do because the focus is challenged after the teacher leaves.” The disconnect that teachers felt as a consequence of not being able to stay throughout the extended day was explained well by one particular teacher:

What I struggle with the most is not being there with the students full-time. I am one of the teachers that do stay all the way until four o’clock when I can, but meetings are pulling me back and other obligations that I need to be back for, which is difficult because then I miss so

much of the curriculum...All the teachers that I've spoken with are struggling with that - working with the instructors, being there with the students, and not being able to be as closely connected to the curriculum as we used to be.

Length of the day

One of the primary challenges faced during the 2014/15 school year was the transition to a longer day. In fact, students were asked what they did not like about SITP or if they had any suggestions for improving the program, the most frequent comment (78 students, approximately 25% of students across grade-level) was about ending the day later. An extended day led to fatigued students and SITP staff; moreover, as discussed above, as students become tired, it was difficult for them to stay focused and on task. One museum educator elaborated, "They've been in an academic setting from seven to four. That's a lot for fourth graders... [teachers] are tired, too. Everybody's tired."

Furthermore, the extended day also resulted in conflicts with afterschool activities, less time for homework, and fewer hours to spend with family and friends. For example, one student explained: "The things I don't like are that I miss out on Sci Tech, dance practice, and I'm in a hurry to get to piano class." Another student said, "I don't like that we have to stay until 4:00 because I have other things to do, but I can't because we get out at 4:00." Parents also commented on the limited time after school on SITP days: "[The] kids usually have other after school activities and

because of the [SITP] schedule, they can't go to them on those days. (SP)"

Finally, the later pick up time was a challenge for some parents due to work schedules or other commitments. Bus arrivals were inconsistent making it difficult to predict when children would be home. For example, one parent's suggestion for improvement was "[t]hat they arrive at a more exact or punctual time because sometimes they arrive later or earlier and you don't really know the actual time. (SP)" Another agreed: "they [should] respect the schedule as best as they can because sometimes they arrive very late. (SP)" At times, teachers or SITP staff needed to stay late waiting for parents to pick up their children.

Instructional and curricular challenges

Teachers remarked that it was challenging when the content and/or timing of a SITP unit did not align with the content or timing of the school-based curriculum. One teacher explained, "We went to the art museum earlier in the year, and I thought while the lessons had good ideas behind them, it didn't really relate to what we were learning this year. When it's disjointed or disconnected, it's kind of hard to tie it all together." Another teacher stated, "We do forensics in 5th grade which is great with fingerprints and all that. Does it go with the curriculum? No. I mean, we could do other things with the curriculum that could go with it a little bit more like mixtures." This misalignment was also frustrating for museum educators: "I find it really challenging that I'm teaching the Gold Rush in October and in May, and in October

the students have no idea what I'm talking about, and by May, they may have done it two months ago [in their regular classroom].”

Some museum educators and teachers also noted that there could be better bridging between SITP and the traditional classroom. The extent to which museum educators and teachers communicated about units before and after a SITP week varied considerably by grade-level, teacher, and museum educator. One museum educator explained, “As much as I've made the curriculum accessible, as much as I've made an activity guide for the adults that are here, I don't think those are being used.” Another museum educator stated, “I've offered for every teacher to come visit their classroom before they come to SITP...only one has taken me up on that.” Moreover, supplemental materials provided to teachers were somewhat inconsistent.

The move to extended day eliminated the need to spend significant time at SITP on traditional core subject instruction. However not all SITP units fully capitalized on the opportunity to implement more museum-based, informal, hands-on, and interactive instruction. As one teacher explained with regard to capitalizing on opportunities, “Fourth grade was pretty strong with the Gold Rush, all of that. You could really roll with it. But the fifth grade felt like, ‘Yeah, I could have done that in the classroom.’ It extended it, but there's so many other things that we could have experienced.”

Benefits of the Extended Day Model

Although there were challenges to

implementation of the extended day model, in interviews and surveys, respondents acknowledged several benefits at both SITP and Rosa Parks Elementary.

First, the extended day model allowed for additional time for core instruction in the morning at Rosa Parks. In fact, teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the primary benefit of the extended day model was to be able to teach literacy and math units prior to leaving for SITP. As one teacher explained, “We get to do our regular curriculum and we don't get behind [compared to] what the district is doing for as many days as we're gone. It's been a big help to us.” Another teacher stated, “This is the first time when we finally came up with something to where they're getting their reading and their math instruction in the classroom. Then they're coming out here [to SITP] and getting the full non-watered-down curriculum. I know there's some trade-offs, but it's pretty much the best solution that we've come to where the kids gets everything.”

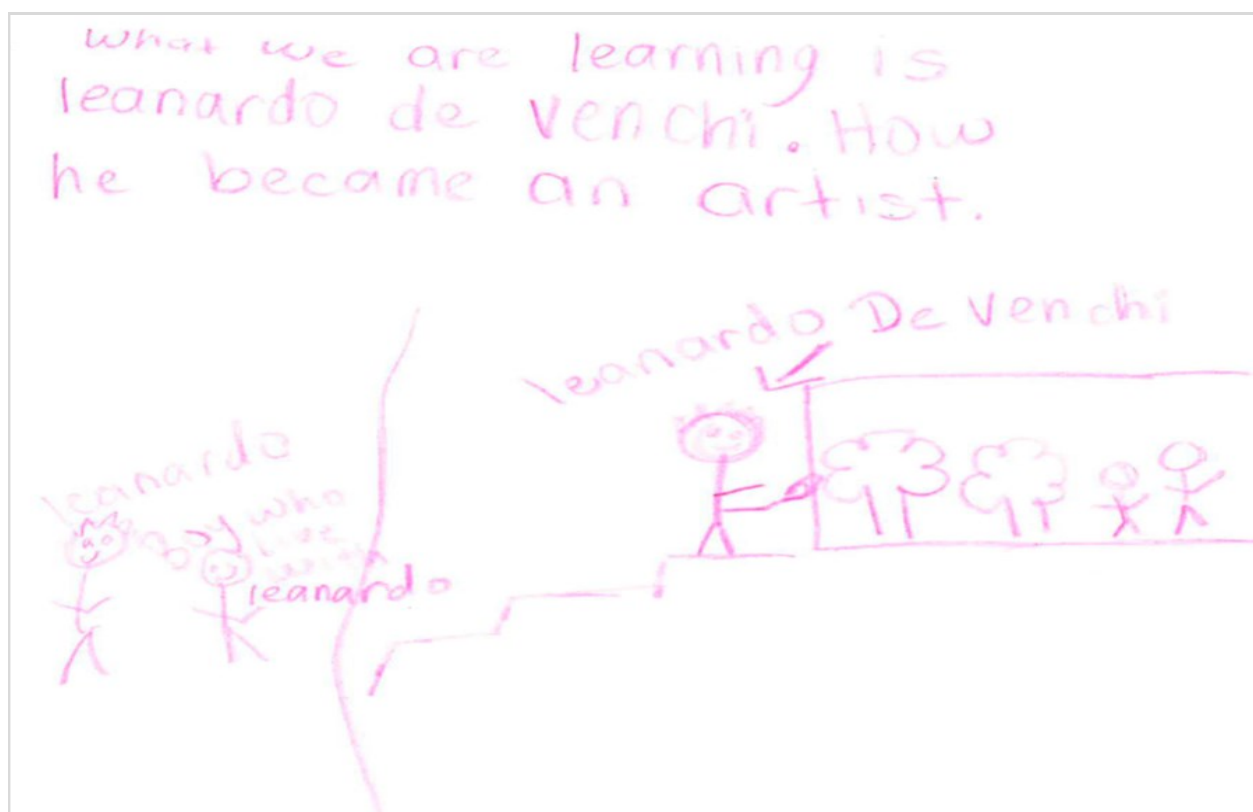
Furthermore, teachers agreed that it was simply easier to teach such content in the traditional classroom rather than trying to incorporate it at Balboa Park. As one teacher explained, “What has worked well is having that morning time. I do like that time where I can specifically work on math, because math was always difficult trying to tie it into the [SITP] curriculum.” A second teacher also said, “We're mandated to do ELD [English Language Development]. We have to teach reading. We have to teach math. We were trying to do it there [at SITP], and we could do it to some extent, but just to have all your

supplies and everything here and not have to drag them to the park, that's been a big help.”

At SITP, the extended day provided the opportunity for more museum-based instruction and informal learning time, which was appreciated by museum educators. As one museum educator noted, “It was nice having the freedom [to plan activities]...I would choose that over going back to the other way. We've been through years where we had to set aside time for guided reading where the teacher had to do this, and then we had math, and it was just...now we can focus on our curriculum.” Teachers also agreed that implementing the extended day model gave students the chance “to do the hands-on things and really use the museums and not take away from what they can get out of [the program] by having to do those other things there.”

Teachers also noted that there was less wasted time with the move to extended day. As one teacher said, “I don't feel like the kids got as much out of those times as they are now...the way that the program, the day is broken up. I think more time is invested in them actually learning the curriculum and not bathroom breaks, to lunch and other logistics.”

Finally, some museum educators noted that it was helpful to have a couple hours in the morning for preparation time prior to student arrival. One museum educator put it this way: “It's definitely easier for me to get everything ready, prepped in the morning before they get here [with the extended day]. We've got a lot of labs to prep for, so it takes some time.”



EQ 4: WHAT WERE THE OVERALL IMPACTS OF SITP ON PARTICIPATING STUDENTS?

According to respondents, the SITP program had numerous impacts on both students and families. Drawing on interview, focus group, survey, and observation data, seven core impacts were identified:

- Expanded knowledge;
- Improved self-regulation and engagement;
- Increased intellectual curiosity;
- Strengthened communication and collaboration skills;
- New confidence;
- Heightened career awareness; and
- Broadened perspectives.

Expanded knowledge

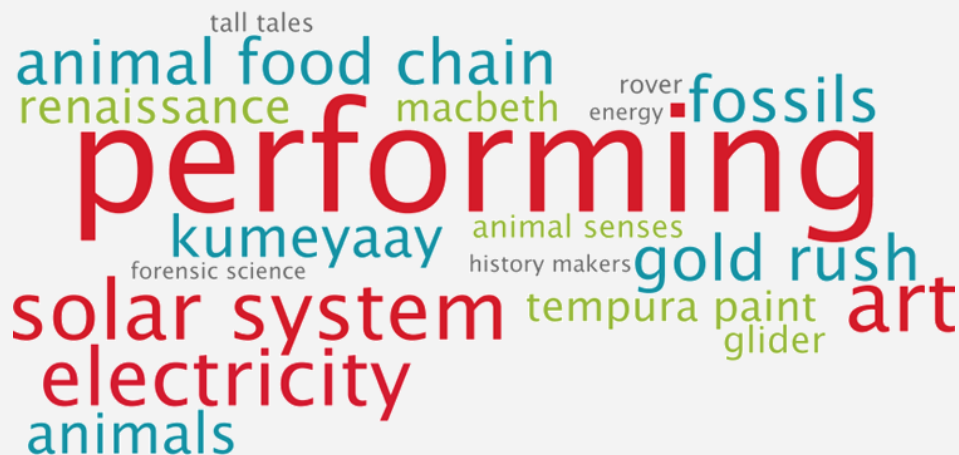
According to teachers, parents, museum educators, and participating students, the program provided an interactive, hands-on space to learn new declarative knowledge (e.g., factual knowledge, information) and extend classroom learning. Students learned about a range of topics from energy and electricity to theatre knowledge, Shakespeare, and the Renaissance. Museum curriculum involved the humanities, arts, social studies, and sciences.

As explained by one teacher, through their work at the Old Globe Theater, students “have gained an understanding of the story. An understanding of character...actor’s tools, and investigation of text and language and time period.” Another respondent shared that at the Museum of Art, students “learn more

about Renaissance artists or places. They get inspired to want to learn more about what it’s like in Florence.” At the Museum of Man, students learned about the Kumeyaay and the San Diego region, including how it has changed over time: “Students have learned how the Kumeyaay survived in all of the different regions. They can recall the different regions and the different ways they survived in each region.” Of his experience at the Museum of Man, one student shared that he learned the difference between an artifact and a natural reserve: “An artifact is something that is made or changed by people and a natural reserve is something nature like soil, rocks, animals, trees.” Finally, a teacher shared that the SITP program extended classroom learning by providing real life examples of declarative knowledge: “When we were at the Fleet Center, learning how something as simple as turning on the light can be a very complex system, how that works. Just all sorts of real life examples on how science isn’t just something we learn in a book.”

In addition to declarative knowledge, Balboa Park institutions afforded the opportunity for students to learn *how* to apply knowledge and new skills (i.e., procedural knowledge). For example, students learned the steps involved with crafting stories and conducting experiments; they learned more than just what actors do in the theatre – they had a chance to practice and utilize the tools of an actor such as imagination, body, and voice.

FIGURE 2. SITP MADE LASTING IMPRESSIONS ON STUDENTS



One student shared how they were learning to use their voice in the Junior Theatre program: “In the morning we play the game that is from our voice. There are two partners and then you need to say something and the other one needs to repeat it. If they repeat it loudly, you can hear it clearly.” At the History Center, students “learned how to read a compass, so they understand that navigation happens for real because there are magnets in the earth and magnets in the compass.” Through many museums, students strengthened their writing and critical analysis skills. One teacher put it this way:

The way they started out was, they just would write a very simple sentence about what they noticed, and then they were really pressed on by the teachers to really look closer in their analytical inventory of what they were seeing. I

noticed that they had a lot more writing; they had a lot more focus on the differences. It was exciting to see them really getting an idea of what real analysis is instead of just looking at something and then going onto the next thing. Just taking a deeper look at what's actually going on.

In student surveys, students were asked to identify what they had learned that they would never forget. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the common responses by students. Performing through either the Junior Theatre or the Old Globe Theater was commonly noted by students as was new art knowledge or skills, and facts about the solar system and electricity. Also noteworthy were the lasting impressions made by the study of animals and fossils, the gold rush, and the Kumeyaay. SITP curriculum was intended to

be aligned to content standards at each of the grade levels. Teachers were asked to rate how much each of the SITP weeks contributed to student learning of grade level content standards on a scale of 1 (Not a lot) to 10 (A great deal). In general, teachers agreed that programming at Balboa Park did contribute to student learning. However, as shown in Table 4, there were variations across institutions regarding how much some curricula were perceived to contribute to learning the content standards. For example, in the 3rd grade, average ratings varied from 5.5 (Museum of Art) to 8.8 (History Center); 4th grade ratings varied from 4.0 (Museum of Art) to 7.8 (Air & Space - energy forces and engineering). And, in the 5th grade, ratings varied from 4.8 (Air & Space – glider experiment) to 9.2 (Fleet Science Center – solar system). It is likely that these variations in ratings are partly due to how aligned curricula are to state grade-level standards. For example, the solar system is covered extensively in the 5th grade, making the units at the Fleet Science Center and Air & Space Museum particularly useful for learning content standards. It is important to note that even though ratings may be lower for some institutions, that does not mean that the curricula were not beneficial for learning or for student growth.

Finally, parents agreed that SITP

TABLE 4. RATINGS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

	N	Mean (1-10)
3rd Grade Curriculum		
History Center - Balboa Park history makers	4	8.8
Zoo - animal classifications	4	8.5
Zoo - animal adaptations/traits	4	8.5
History Center - mapping Balboa Park	4	8.3
Zoo - habitats, ecology, conservation	3	8.3
Museum of Man - Kumeyaay	4	7.8
Junior Theatre - tall tales	4	7.3
Museum of Art – elements of art	2	5.5
4th Grade Curriculum*		
Air & Space - energy forces and engineering	4	7.8
Fleet - electricity	4	7.5
Natural History - fossils	4	6.8
Junior Theatre - Gold Rush	3	6.3
Zoo - animal senses and survival	3	6.0
Museum of Art - Silk Road	3	4.0
5th Grade Curriculum		
Fleet - solar system	6	9.2
Air & Space - solar system	6	8.5
Fleet - forensic science	6	8.3
Zoo - animal food chain	6	8.2
Museum of Art - Renaissance art	6	7.3
Old Globe - Macbeth	5	6.2
Air & Space - glider experiment	6	4.8

*The History Center was not included because too few classes had visited prior to the survey administration.

programming was extremely influential on student learning and new knowledge. In fact, on a parent survey, 73% of parents said SITP helped their child get better grades in school. Eighty-one percent of parents reported that SITP helped their child read better. Moreover, as discussed on page 8, parents noted that students often talked about their SITP experiences at home, including what they learned. For example, one parent noted: “They talk about past cultures, talk about evolution, even about how they do experiments with electricity using batteries.” (SP)

Improved self-regulation and engagement

Many respondents noted that SITP had a positive impact on student behavior, and self-regulation, in particular. Various experiences at SITP were used as opportunities to teach students how to regulate their own learning individually and in groups. Through SITP activities, students were exposed to appropriate museum-going behavior which promoted learning how to be patient, wait in line, and respect other patrons. Moreover, there were clear behavior expectations at each of the institutions that facilitated positive behavior: “The other thing they realize is we’re very clear with our behavioral expectations. They have unprecedented access behind the scenes. They know if they’re choosing not to participate or choosing not to learn the material, they don’t get the access.”

An emphasis on complete participation and engagement – and its effect on others – was

also observed in many SITP contexts. For example, at the Old Globe Theater, teachers and museum educators agreed that students were particularly motivated. According to one teacher, “I had one kid with an appointment and someone else that wasn’t feeling good and both of them told me, ‘My mom wasn’t sure if I should go to school, but I wanted to come because I wanted to be there to practice the play.’” The teacher went on to explain: “Nobody gets to not participate. They have to get up in front of an audience and get on stage. They have to act, they have to have the loud voice and they have to memorize lines, so they have to do their part so everybody else can do their part too.”

At the Museum of Man, students participated in a reward-based system that was aligned with learning more about the Kumeyaay and the resources in the region. Students were placed in teams that sat together throughout the week. When group behavior was particularly on point (i.e., time on task, cleaning up, paying attention, etc.), students received points that they could later use that Friday in a trade game focused on gathering natural resources and food. The system taught students to work together and stay engaged throughout the week on the content.

At the Fleet Science Center, it was common for the museum educator to say things like, “Don’t ever tell me you’re done. There is always something to do” in order to encourage students to stay engaged in and take responsibility for their own learning. In observations, students were seen repeating that mantra in small groups when their peers



would become disengaged because they felt “finished.”

Finally, many of the projects at SITP required patience and persistence to see them through to the end; students became engaged, motivated, and more self-regulated. For example, at the Museum of Art, an interviewee put it this way “it takes time and patience in order to create these projects... Even with the ones that normally have a really hard time in school or aren’t engaged in school, when they come here, they’re engaged, [and] it’s very rewarding.”

Parents agreed that SITP had a positive impact on student behavior. In fact, on the parent survey, 95% of parents indicated that SITP helped their child attend school more, and 87% of parents indicated that SITP helped their children behave better.

Increased intellectual curiosity

Beyond increased engagement in learning, according to respondents, participating students also demonstrated increased intellectual curiosity at SITP and later in their classrooms and at home. One museum educator explained: “I think we see the impact in their enthusiasm, in their projects, how well they’ve completed their projects and in the comments that they say, their curiosity, and how many questions they’re asking.” Another teacher summarized in the following way:

I’m finding that they’re going home and they’re doing their own personal research and I’ll ask them, ‘Where did you get that? Did you learn that yesterday, because I was there and I didn’t remember hearing that.’ They’ll say, ‘Oh, no, no. I went and I looked it up.’ They’re going out and they’re

gaining more knowledge on their own, which is huge. They're realizing that learning is not just in the classroom, but it's not just done out in the museums, but it's also done on their own accord. It's also done at home as well.

Parents also indicated that SITP had positively influenced interest in learning: on the parent survey, 98% of parents said SITP helped their child enjoy learning more. A student explained it well when he said his favorite part about SITP was the learning: “I love learning, and I love exploring.” In focus groups, students likewise shared how one of their favorite parts of SITP was to be able to experience more learning. One 5th grader put it this way: “[My favorite part] is that now you get to have two more hours of learning... you can learn more by going to museums and stuff.” Other students agreed, saying, “We learn something new, that we never knew about,” and “My favorite part of SITP is when we go and learn about stuff that we didn't learn about in school.”

Strengthened communication & collaboration skills

Many of the experiences at SITP emphasized communication and collaboration skills. During site visits, it was common to see activities that involved writing prompts so that students could practice communicating about what they were learning. Group projects involved coordination and communication among members in order to be successful. One teacher remarked, “When they do groups, they collaborate more...and speak a little more.”

Moreover, in many contexts students worked on oral communications skills and how to plan well prior to presentations. At the History Center, students gave presentations and received ample coaching on their communication skills, including voice projection, eye contact, and posture. In the theater contexts, in particular, students worked on pronunciation and enunciation skills and learned more about “having a presence” when communicating. One teacher explained, “I like the fact about the voice and how we need to enunciate because that goes along with listening and speaking in the classroom, or just in general. I see positives for sure.” Another respondent added: “Changes that you're immediately able to see are...verbal communication, so the ways in which they are articulating, and I mean that in the very literal sense of the articulation of the words, so the way in which they are articulating, verbally communicating, the ways in which they are collaborating.”

SITP programming was considered particularly beneficial for strengthening the communication of English Learners. A museum educator explained: “School in the Park provides authentic, meaningful, relevant learning. I think what it really does for non-English speakers, is it bridges the gap from passive learning to active involvement. You'll have students who don't feel really confident about speaking or writing, but boy, out here, they really have something they want to talk about.” A teacher concurred: “I see [English Learners] sharing their ideas with each other, more conversation...they're actually grasping. They're the ones that I really see the

most success in, because they have that hands on, they have that visual, and the quality of their work always improves when it's SITP work."

Parents noted that their children were communicating more at home and had better writing skills. On the parent survey, 79% of parents reported that SITP helped their child write better. When asked about changes in their children that were due to SITP, several remarked on changes in communication and collaboration skills: "She writes much neater and she listens more," and "She learned how to study as a group." One parent put it this way: "I have been very satisfied with the time my daughter has spent in SITP because she has learned and has improved in her writing and reading and collaborating and sharing. (SP)"

New confidence

It was common for respondents to remark on the new confidence and increased belief in self that came from participating in SITP. In many of the SITP institutions, students are involved deeply in trying something new and persisting even when they struggle to do well the first time. In the theater contexts, for example, they practice and rehearse song and dance numbers and work to memorize lines. Many students start off a bit apprehensive, but by the end of week and performance time, teachers and museum educators observed that students feel confident and are proud of what they had accomplished.

The programming at the Fleet Science Center resulted in greater confidence among

typically more quiet students, by providing a forum where students were encouraged to share ideas about getting projects started and take risks. One respondent remarked: "They're just a lot more confident and coming up with ideas for different projects that they do. At first, they were really shy and trying not to put their ideas out there. Now there's a lot more discussion, a lot more input. Quiet children are way more outgoing and putting their two cents in, in a conversation about what to do or how to start something."

One museum educator believed that the SITP program is particularly beneficial for students with special needs: "SITP offers opportunities for students that don't necessarily have the same recognition or time or opportunities at school. Particularly for our students with special needs, this can become their time to shine. If they're doing a crafting activity, if they're engaging in other things that they might not have access to, they tend to excel."

Parents concurred with museum educators and teachers. In fact, on the parent survey, 90% of parents indicated that SITP helped their children *feel* they can do better in school.

Heightened career awareness

Many of the SITP experiences included opportunities to learn about potential careers – zoologists, curators, theater professionals, artists, historians, scientists. According to teachers, museum educators, and students themselves, SITP did indeed result in

heightened career awareness. One teacher put it this way:

They start thinking about themselves and the possibility of being a scientist, the possibility of being an artist. I hear that. I hear them talking, and it makes for such a great change...Usually, [kids] are very general. I want to be a nurse, a doctor, or a teacher, and then they get to third grade and after they have this experience at SITP, suddenly [they] are going to be an engineer. I'm going to be a zoologist, marine biologist. It is amazing that it gives them a whole new perspective. I see that."

According to another teacher, SITP is particularly important for students because it helps to break down ideas regarding access to certain careers: "I think that getting to see

different genders, different races in these higher scientific jobs are also really good as well, really positive. When we saw a female scientist...they said 'scientists are only male.' It was very interesting to see what they think and then break those stereotypes."

Moreover, SITP exposed students to a range of opportunities within disciplines. For example, theater experiences enabled them to learn more about the variety of jobs available in performing arts:

There's a lot of careers that can come out of being in the arts...it's not just the actors. It's not just the actors on TV. It's not just the singers who have platinum albums. There's a whole spectrum of careers that are available to them. They really will only see just a sliver of that, but even when they realize, there's more



that goes on that in order to make a show happen, someone has to design a costume. Someone has to turn on the lights. Someone has to sell the tickets. Someone has to write the script.

Students also learned about the diversity of museum careers available: “They learn about the museum careers...they talked to somebody down in our collections department. They talked to someone in our exhibits department. Being able to see the possibilities. I think is really important because that helps expand their idea of what’s possible, what they could do.”

In surveys and focus groups, students shared the various career interests they already have. As seen in Figures 3-5, students were asked to rate a variety of careers on a 3-point scale from not interested (1) to very interested (3). Notably, work with animals, artists, and

theater work rose to the top of the list across all grade levels.

On the student survey, students were also asked to identify a single job that they would like to have when they grow up. Figure 6, page 24, illustrates the most common jobs identified by students. Not surprisingly, many careers associated with SITP were listed by students (highlighted in blue). Consistent with ratings of interest and student satisfaction with SITP experiences overall, it was common for students to indicate work with animals, artists, and actors.

Broadened Perspectives

As noted in the Introduction, a core objective of the SITP program is to provide exposure to opportunities that students might not otherwise be able to access. In interviews and surveys, several respondents indicated that

FIGURE 3. CAREER INTEREST (3RD GRADE)

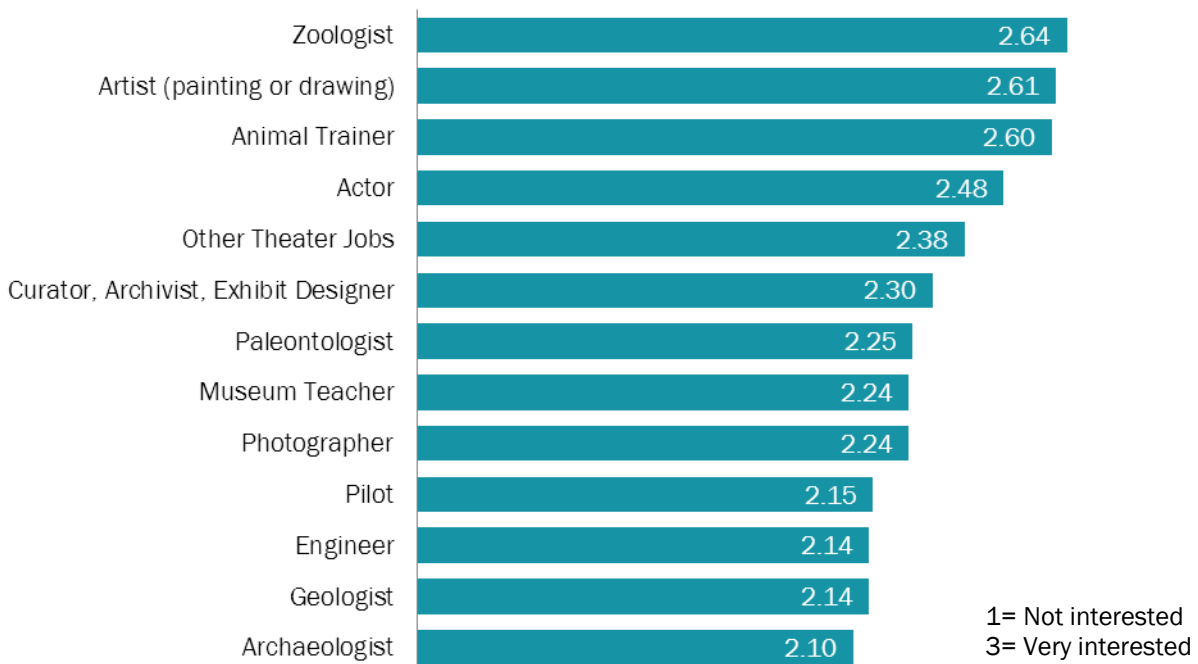


FIGURE 4. CAREER INTEREST (4TH GRADE)

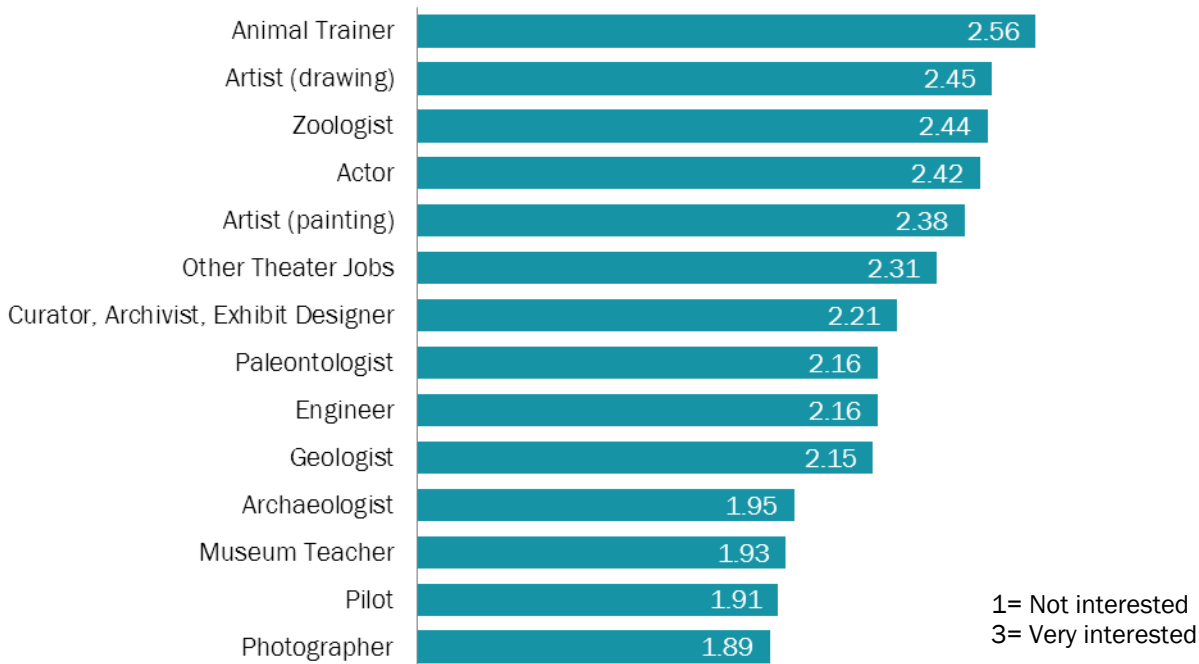
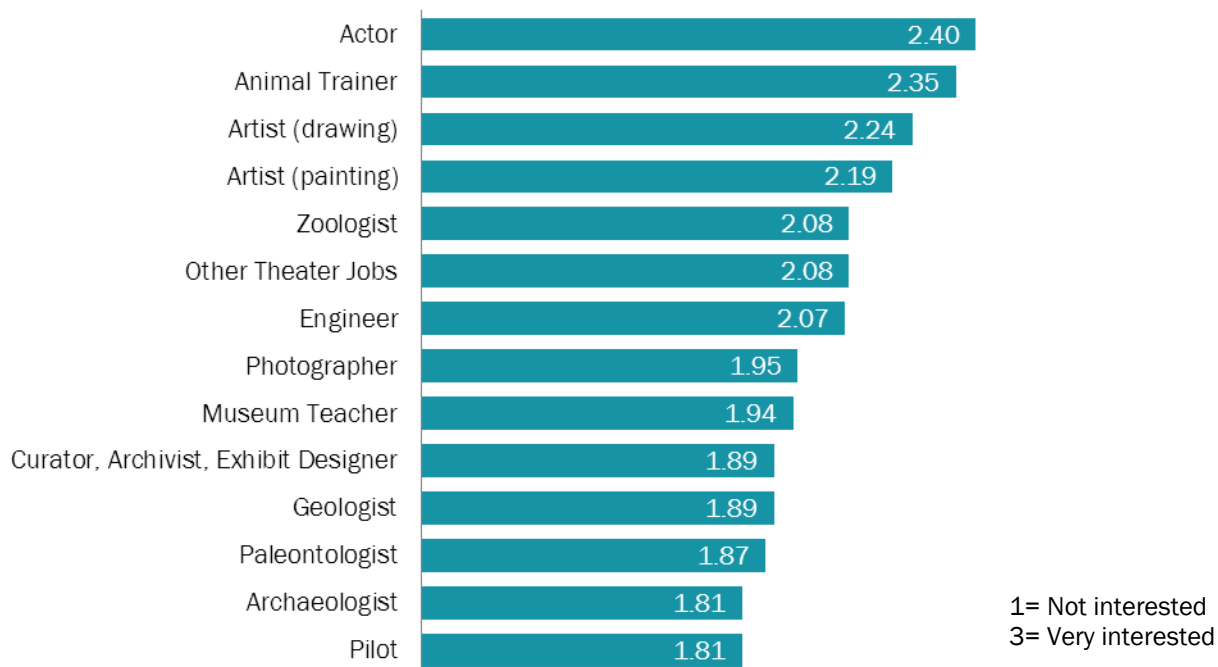


FIGURE 5. CAREER INTEREST (5TH GRADE)



SITP did, in fact, broaden perspectives and offer experiences not readily available at Rosa Parks or in their local communities. One teacher explained: “I just see it as a really wonderful experience for students, and I think it’s something that they’re going to take with them for life. They are going to remember a lot of the things that they’ve done at SITP over a hundred things that I can have them read in book. I think, for me, that is as important a learning experience, and they may not get it anywhere else.” In fact, several teachers from Rosa Parks talked about the lasting impressions on participating students. Two teachers put it this way:

When my former students come back, actually this past couple of days, I have a [former student] who is a second-year university [student] in Washington finally found me on Facebook. When a

student can remember things that we’ve done, we’d learned, talked about, and dealt with hands on, that’s when I know it’s successful because it’s ingrained in them and they carry it with them.

Already, I am seeing students come back who are at Hoover High...and they tell me, “Oh, I remember the park...Oh yeah.” I ask them what they want to do and I know for a fact that they’re influenced by the program and that they’re going to college and they are thinking about the kinds of careers they want to have.”

Notably, several parents shared that their children were learning about topics that they would not necessarily know about without SITP. Moreover, it was common for parents to mention that their children might not have

FIGURE 6. WHAT JOB DO YOU WANT TO HAVE WHEN YOU GROW UP?



been to Balboa Park without the program. Furthermore, parents viewed SITP as an opportunity to experience hands-on and interactive instruction and artistic activities that were not available at school or anywhere else (see Figure 7).

In focus groups and surveys, students echoed what educators and parents said about the opportunity to gain new perspectives and experiences. One 4th grader shared: “We get to go to a lot of museums; different kinds of museums.” Other 4th grade students concurred: “I like going to SITP because we get to travel to lots of different places, ” and “My favorite part of the Junior Theatre is that we get to see new things and do new things.”

The SITP program also appeared to have an impact on the parents and families of participating students: 44% of parents used the passes provided by the SITP program, and 61% of parents say they visited Balboa Park on their own with their child. On the student survey, students agreed: a majority of students indicated they had visited Balboa Park with their families (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. PERCENT OF STUDENTS VISITING BALBOA PARK WITH FAMILY

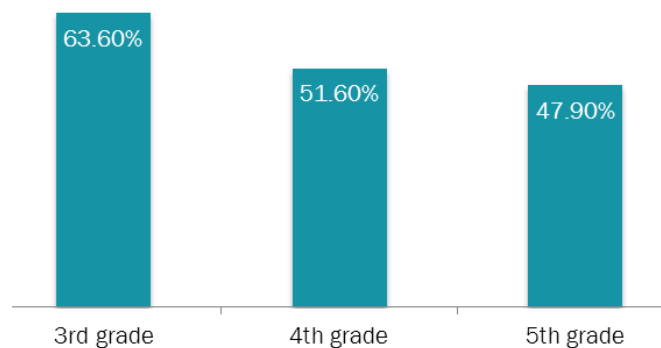


FIGURE 7. PARENTS' RESPONSES TO SITP'S IMPACT

[She] is more familiar with Balboa Park. She has never been there before SITP.

My child likes SITP because she learns things she never knew about and also a chance to get out of class into a different learning environment.

He likes to learn about animals, art, and different things he usually doesn't learn about in class.

Because of the activities they do and because at SITP they have more materials available to do more projects that helps them learn more. (SP)

He learns about subjects and topics that he wouldn't necessarily have learned in class. The exhibitions and museums help connect the reading and broadens their knowledge. (SP)

I like that they have an opportunity to learn by visual and hands on at the museums.

Children are learning a lot of things they never knew about.

They expose the students to museums and they have new experiences and opportunities that they wouldn't necessarily have had by just visiting the museum with the family. (SP)

That they give them the opportunity to learn about the museum. It's something that as parents, sometimes we cannot do. (SP)

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the satisfaction of SITP stakeholders, ascertain the various impacts of the program on students and families, examine the challenges to program implementation, and assess the benefits of the extended day model.

Overall, students and their parents are extremely satisfied with the SITP program and the opportunities afforded through the extended day model. Through observations, interviews, surveys, and focus groups we learned that the SITP program is positively affecting students in numerous ways. Most notably, the program is enhancing the knowledge and skills of students. While the program is making a positive impact on the academics of students, it is also supplementing the experience of students in four critical ways.

First, students are accessing a range of activities focused in the arts; the benefits of these additional experiences were highlighted over and over again by numerous students, parents, teachers, and museum educators. *Second*, the program provides interactive and hands-on instruction that allows students to see how concepts play out in the real world rather than simply reading about them in the book. Both museum educators and teachers consistently highlighted the importance of SITP for making these connections and enhancing learning. *Third*, students are learning about careers in a variety of fields that would be unlikely to know about

otherwise. Moreover, the program is helping to break down stereotypes that exist regarding access to certain careers. *Lastly*, SITP broadens the perspectives of students by enabling them to access and also participate in civic and cultural institutions that they might not have accessed otherwise. In fact, there is evidence that their families are also benefiting through the conversations they have with their children and their own visits to Balboa Park.

Moreover, the implementation of an extended day model for the program was also perceived to be beneficial. Students received instruction in core subject areas in the morning prior to going to SITP; this was viewed by both teachers and museum educators as a significant advantage of the extended day model. Furthermore, museum educators appreciated the opportunity to shift the program towards more museum-based, interactive instruction and the additional time to plan.

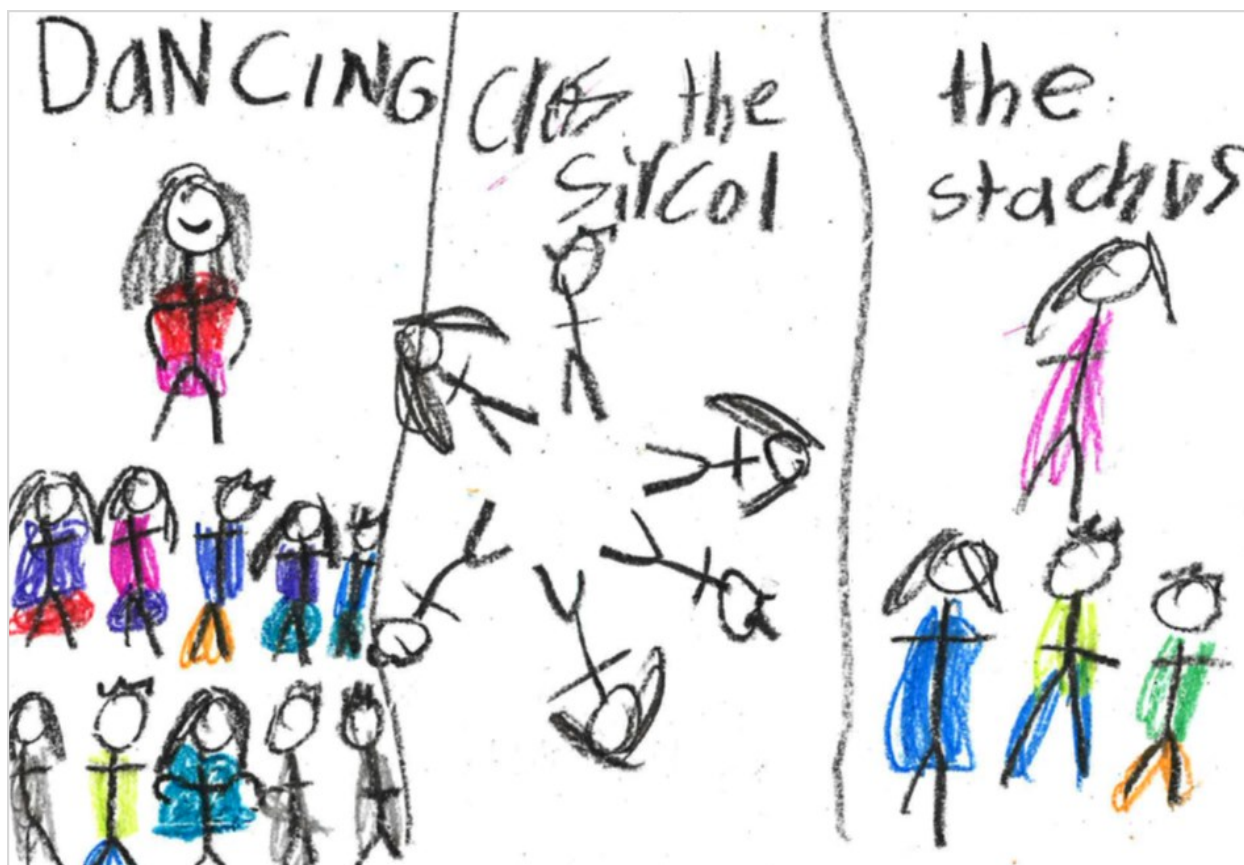
Respondents noted a few challenges to implementation that should be considered as the program continues. Although the extended day model has several advantages, including additional instructional time, it brings with it a much longer day for the students and for the adults. Teachers and museum educators also shared some concerns regarding the role of teachers in the program and inconsistencies in the delivery of the program across museum educators, grade-levels, and teachers.

Going forward, we have the following recommendations for quality improvements:

- Capitalize on the opportunity for informal, hands-on learning by revisiting existing units and incorporating more museum-based interactive content.
- Strengthen teacher and museum educator communication prior to and post SITP units in order to support more SITP program-classroom alignment and bridging of content.
- Be explicit about the role of teachers at the museum and their responsibilities regarding content, curricula, and instructional support.
- Considering the challenges surrounding

the length of day and teacher absence, plan content and activities that are responsive to student needs and reduce the likelihood for misbehavior.

- Minimize the homework that is required for students during SITP weeks.
- Build on the units that work particularly well by sharing best practices across museums.
- Formalize the theory of change underlying the SITP program and incorporate some of the findings reported here. Disseminate the program's theory and evaluation findings broadly in order to strengthen commitment to the goals of the program and build buy-in for the effort.





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