



Amherst Dance Academy Newsletter



What's new this year? ...a name, a syllabus, what else?

Why use a syllabus?

Any class, whether it's an elementary class, high school class, college class, or beyond, continues to be taught by a syllabus. Likewise, all over the world, ballet is taught with a syllabus. A syllabus will keep dancers on track, they will always be building on what they have mastered—no matter who the teacher is.

What made you choose this syllabus?

I've been researching, and not only is this a quality syllabus, deriving its technique from RAD (Royal Academy of Dance), Cecchetti, and ISTD (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing), but it is also based on encouragement, building confidence, and accepting of all body types.

How will I know when my child has mastered their material and is ready to move to the next level?

Every year, exams will be given to the students. The purpose of these yearly exams is to give both students and parents a common goal to work towards. It is through these examinations that these goals are fulfilled, and the achievements become a source of inspiration.

Excitement for ballet exams?

Ballet exams will prove to be a highlight of each dancer's year! Many of you know that I was able to visit a dance studio in Houston, TX. When I was there, the students were busy preparing for their exams which were only a couple of weeks away. I saw so much excitement in the girls - one girl was jumping up and down, as she said, "I can't WAIT for exams!"

When and where are ballet exams?

In the late winter/early spring, Amherst Dance Academy will be hosting ballet exams. All ballet dancers, from about age 5 or 6 will get to participate.

How do the exams work?

Beginners, only when they are ready (usually age 5-6), are examined in a full group with their teacher leading the class. All other grades are examined with 2 or 3 students at a time.

Examinees receive one grade for technique and one for expression and artistry. Each student receives a certificate and a written report from the examiner.

What do students wear for exams?

Exams are classical and formal occasions. Students take special care to prepare every detail of the physical presentation. Hair must be in classical bun with no bangs, black leotard with tank top, no skirts unless pre-arranged, pink tights, usually ribbons on clean, well-fitted pink practice shoes.

What are pre-exam classes?

These classes are above and beyond their regular ballet class. They give each student the opportunity to achieve their personal best. On average, a 70% improvement takes place during this preparation time.

Are there still going to be parent observations?

This year, all classes will be taught in the largest studio. Because of that, parents will be able to watch each and every class through the observation window. We will still invite the parent's into class two times throughout the year. A parent is also invited (and encouraged) to attend the pre-exam classes. She can then take notes for her dancer to aid in practice time at home.

Where are the combination classes?

We continue to offer a combination class for 4-5 year olds, but at a longer length of 1.25 hours: 45minutes (instead of 30 min) of ballet, and 30min of tap. When a dancer's age requires an hour of ballet and 45minutes of tap, these classes will now be offered separately.

Why do some classes meet 2x/week?

Usually, by about age 10, dancers have learned many foundational steps. Dancing two times per week, gives these students more adequate time to not only master the skills they are learning, but continue to learn and eventually master new steps and combinations.

Do we still register 2x/ year?

Registration is now done per dancer per year. You will no longer need to pay a registration fee to begin dance classes again in January.

What about reward points that I've earned through Terrific Time?

All reward points accumulated under the name of Terrific Time Dance Studio are fully transferable to Amherst Dance Academy.

What if my child cannot continue dancing in the spring semester?

A 30-day written notice is required if you wish to change or drop your class.

Is there a new dress code for regular class?

Students enrolled in the red or pink class, still have a colored leotard for their class dress code. All the other ballet classes will be participating in exams, so to help you out financially, class dress code will be the same as for exams. You won't have to purchase anything additional for exams. Ballet class: Black, tank-style leotard; pink ballet tights, pink ballet shoes. Tap, Hip-hop, Lyrical, and Tumbling class: Leotard and tights - no specific color! Dance shorts and dance capris are acceptable over a leotard. No T-shirts/sweatshirts.