

# **The Ballroom Bonus**

## **A Qualitative and Journalistic Study of the Benefits of Ballroom Dance in Utah Valley Public Schools**

### **Project Purpose**

This project seeks to qualitatively evaluate the benefit of ballroom dancing in public schools through journalistic means, determining the benefits recognized by current and previous students of the programs, parents, teachers, and administrations as well as the struggles that existing and hopeful programs have. It is hoped that the finished product will be a package that local school programs can use to garner support for ballroom programs, both curricular and extra-curricular, from administrative bodies.

### **Project Importance**

In today's technology-heavy culture, many children and teens lack meaningful social face-to-face interactions that build critical interaction skills that will benefit them into adult life. Ballroom dance allows students to interact face-to-face, boys with girls, allowing a healthy social interaction between genders. In addition to helping kids develop social skills, confidence, and self-esteem, participants also learn acceptable touch, respect, teamwork, and communication.

Many schools face budget shortages, causing art programs to suffer nationwide, especially extra-curricular ones like ballroom dance programs, due to program cuts or little to no funding. Administrations may benefit from an evaluation of the benefits of a ballroom program as seen from the successes of current and past students, parents, and teachers and administrations that currently support ballroom programs. Additionally, parents seeking to provide their kids with a meaningful social and team building experience may benefit from having more information about ballroom dance in their area.

Over the last few decades, ballroom dancing has exploded in Utah Valley schools, increasing from a single program to over twenty elementary, middle, high school, and charter school programs. Various organizations, including Danzinskule Education Foundation and Utah Ballroom Education Association, have formed to coordinate the efforts of various schools and provide students with competitive and team building opportunities. With hundreds of families involved, this is a relevant topic for the Utah Valley area. Learning from the successes and struggles of each of these organizations may provide a key to help local programs grow and maintain growth.

### **Project Profile Body**

Having conducted a basic sample survey of people currently involved in ballroom dance, I have found that of the 175 responses, half of those who began ballroom previous to college started in public schools. A vast number of these credit ballroom as having boosted their confidence, improved their social skills, and provided a needed creative outlet. Several reported increased opportunities for scholarships, a university education, and cultural and travel experiences due to their involvement. This project will expand upon the results of this survey through interviews with past and present students involved in public dance programs, parents, teachers, and administrations to discover qualitative benefits of ballroom programs from each angle. This information will be presented in a multi-media format including a feature article, video essay, and website aggregation of information related to ballroom dancing in public schools. Video snippets and transcriptions of interviews will also be included in formats that will help parents and administration easily navigate information.

### **Anticipated Academic Outcome**

I intend to present this information to public school administrations as an added incentive for them to accept and support arts programs, but especially ballroom dance, in their schools. I will also create a website where interested students, parents, and administrations may easily access

information regarding public school ballroom programs. I hope that this will continue to be a lasting source of information that I will continue to populate with more interviews and resources. It may also be used by Danzinskule Education Foundation in their work to garner financial support for public school ballroom programs and initiatives. It is my hope that this project will be my way of "going forth to serve," using my skills and passions to further a worthy cause. I also see this project as a wonderful opportunity to integrate my various fields of study, namely, a journalism major and editing and ballroom dance minors.

### **Qualifications**

Robert Walz is the director for the communications capstone class and has guided a vast number of student projects to success. His skills in broadcast journalism and storytelling will help me present a compelling piece that will provide a comprehensive focus on the issue.

Marci Edgington holds a Masters Degree in dance, is a dual licentiate with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance, and is recognized by the National Dance Council of America as a "Championship" judge and scrutineer. She directs the BYU Social Dance Program where over 2000 students participate annually in some 30 classes and teaches courses in ballroom pedagogy, technique and theory. Additionally, she has trained and supported teachers in the public schools for many years and often presents at teacher trainings. Her subject expertise will be very valuable in helping me provide information pertinent and useful to my audience.

As a journalism student, I am well practiced in holding interviews and writing stories. I know how to aggregate information and can write to reach an audience, providing informative, interesting, and helpful content.

### **Project Timetable**

Preliminary Research = Sept 26

Data Collection = Oct 12

Story/Script Approval = November 20

Basic Project Completion = Dec 6

Repurpose for web and social media platforms = Dec 8-15

Additional interviews and supplemental presentations = February 20

Evaluation of public school ballroom presence at US Nationals = March 10

Final comprehensive presentation = March 15

### **Scholarly Sources**

AERA Open. (2016). *Is Kindergarten the New First Grade?* D. Bassok, S. Lanttham, A. Rorem. Retrieved from <http://ero.sagepub.com/content/spero/2/1/2332858415616358.full.pdf>

Americans for the Arts. (2015). *The State Status Report: A Review of State and Regional Arts Education Studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/the-state-status-report-a-reveiw-of-state-and-regional-arts-education-studies>

Nelson, L. P. (2009, April). *Dancing Classrooms: A School Climate Study of Social Development*. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport (Vol. 80, No. 1, pp. A15-A16). Retrieved from [https://aahperd.confex.com/aahperd/2009/finalprogram/paper\\_12417.htm](https://aahperd.confex.com/aahperd/2009/finalprogram/paper_12417.htm)

Remer, Jane. *From Lessons Learned to Local Action: Building Your Own Policies for Effective Arts Education*. Arts Education Policy Review (Vol. 111, Issue 3, 2010). Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10632911003626879>

Other Sources:

<http://www.danzinskule.org/>

<http://dancingclassroomsseattle.com/>

## Honors Thesis Estimated Costs

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
SD Cards	Video and data storage	2 cards	\$ 50.00
Computer Rental with editing software	Edit video projects	6 months	\$ 120.00
Pay an additional videographer	Help shoot video; \$100 per day	2 half-days	\$ 100.00
	Help edit content; \$35 per hour	20 hours	\$ 700.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 970.00</b>

NOTE: Additional costs of travel, editing, and website development will hopefully be covered through an ORCA grant. The application has been submitted and is being reviewed.