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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE: HOW PARTICIPATING IN *THE NUTCRACKER*
ENHANCES STUDENT MOTIVATION AND GROWTH IN
SOCIOECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Angelina Mia Burleigh

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance
Dance Education

December 2021

This Thesis by: Angelina Mia Burleigh

Entitled: *Community Perspective: How Participating in The Nutcracker Enhances Student Motivation and Growth in Socioeconomically Depressed Public Schools*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Theatre and Dance, Dance Education Program

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ABSTRACT

Burleigh, Angelina Mia, *Community Perspective: How Participating in The Nutcracker Enhances Student Motivation and Growth in Socioeconomically Depressed Public Schools*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2021.

This research study exclusively focused on performing arts dance programs in socioeconomically depressed public schools. It is the belief of this researcher that providing dance within a framework of the dance standards affords students with the opportunity to truly experience the art of dance, since they not only received the chance to learn good technique from a highly qualified educator, but they are also provided with choreographic and performance opportunities which allow them to communicate a story, express feelings, or emotions through movement to discover their imaginative abilities. The goal of this study was to examine how dance education impacts students as well as school communities in these socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Two socioeconomically depressed schools where *The Nutcracker* had been produced were invited to participate in the research study. Although students from two different schools were invited to participate, only students from one school chose to respond. There were thirty-five students, both current and alumni, who participated in this study. For this research, Tchaikovsky's ballet, *The Nutcracker*, was selected for many reasons as the performance production used as a measurement in the evaluation of students' attitudes and involvement in school and to ascertain community and school faculty involvement. The performance production provides an opportunity for students, their family, and the school community to come together. *The Nutcracker* ballet and music are strongly associated with the holiday season and a general

time of getting together. Owing to the wide variety of roles in the ballet, in casting roles for *The Nutcracker*, the choreographer instructor can structure dances so beginners to advanced dancers can shine.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- Q1 Do public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student engagement in school?
- Q2 Do public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student creativity, motivation, and involvement in school?

The instrument used to collect data for this study consisted of an online survey administered via Qualtrics software program. The survey consisted of twenty-eight questions. Fourteen questions required students to answer multi-choice questions of which two allowed students to provide an additional written response if the categories provided did not fully allow them to express their feelings. This survey was structured to provide answers that were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Participants of this study were able to express the value to them in participating in a performing arts dance program. The results from the multi-choice data were analyzed quantitatively while the results of the written answers were analyzed qualitatively.

Limitations of this study included the small sample size. Only thirty-five students participated in the study. Another factor is that although the study sought to include two socioeconomically depressed public schools, only students from one school responded to the survey. An additional factor to be considered that possibly limited the veracity of the study was the relationship between teacher and student could have affected the student's engagement in school, their effort in class, and their feelings of personal growth. Subsequent surveys could have divergent outcomes depending on the teacher-student relationship. An additional factor that may

have an effect is that data were only gathered for five month and students that were more positively affected might have been more willing to immediately respond, and study was not conducted long enough to ensure students less motivated to respond had the opportunity to do so.

Research to support dance as part of the academic curriculum may seem irrelevant to some; however, the importance of this study is that this research focuses on students' feedback about the meaning and value of how combining a strong academic and performing arts dance program affected them and their education. When structuring an academic program to promote elevated levels of student achievement, it is not only important to consider educators' views, theory and knowledge but also listen to the students who are affected by these decisions. Student input is a vital component to determine the success of an academic program. Participants' responses provide a greater understanding of the value of dance arts opportunities to socioeconomically depressed public schools. The outcome of this research positively supports the research questions. This thesis provides verification that a performing arts dance program integrated in a strong academic school in socioeconomically depressed area is a strong incentive to promote student achievement and helps them reach their personal potential, increase motivation and engagement in school, as well as promote creativity. This research study provided evidence that students in this study overwhelming voiced their love of dance and their desire to attend a school that offers a rigorous academic and a performing arts dance program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

The arts are often considered a universal language that provides a spectrum of overlapping values and religious, political, and cultural interests, which allows individuals to present their feelings, imagination, and traditions for every society to appreciate. While disciplines such as music and the visual arts have a long documented written and visual history to validate their importance, the legacy of dance is left in the memory of dance pioneers, which is why continuing research in the field of dance education is vital. In California public schools, both music and visual arts are each recognized as their own unique academic fields while dance, when offered, has generally been considered to fall under the physical education content area umbrella. The placement of dance as a subcategory of physical education is perhaps the most significant sign of misunderstanding the art of dance. The primary concern of dance is the expressive exploration and creation of meaning or spiritual value, which is not a characteristic of physical education. Such creative activities as performing arts dance education in the curriculum offer many learning advantages for students including providing students with the opportunity to think beyond the four walls of the classroom and recognizing that practice improves performance. A performing arts dance program can effectively teach students that making mistakes is part of learning which promotes creativity, collaboration, and self-discovery as well as empathy and kindness. The Fast Response Survey System and the National Assessment of Education Progress, which are part of the National Center for Education Statistics

under the aspects of the U.S. Department of Education, cite that of students receiving dance, “36% receive dance training from teachers in physical education, and only 7% receive their training from dance specialists” (Bradley et al. 34). As those percentages reveal, the vast majority of dance classes are taught by teachers not qualified to teach dance and are most probably structured as a physical activity and not as a performing art. Considerable research suggests that dance education has a significant impact on students and academics. Evidence is growing that dance impacts learning in many diverse ways, including self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the creative process. As Bradley et al. assert, “In schools where dance programs flourish, students’ attendance rises, teachers are more satisfied, and the overall sense of community grows” (56).

To truly experience and engage in the art of dance, students must have the opportunity to learn good technique from a highly qualified educator who allows students to tell a story and express feelings or emotions through movement to discover their imaginative abilities. For the purpose of this research study, dance education in California public schools is discussed based on the types of dance classes offered. The first type of dance class is part of the physical education curriculum and is taught by a physical education teacher with little or no experience in dance. The class is usually held in a gym or on the field with no dance-specific equipment and focuses on physical fitness and movement criteria. The student receives physical education credit for completing the class. The second type of dance class might appear to offer more components of a dance class because it is held in a classroom that might have ballet barres or mirrors and offers different styles of dances; however, this class is still classified as physical education and not taught by a qualified dance specialist. The teacher is typically a licensed physical education teacher and does not necessarily have any training in the field of dance. The class is not

structured around technique and might include some styles of dance as well as dance fitness activities such as Zumba, Latin cardio, hip hop, aerobics, and Jazzercise. This type of program is limited by the absence of performance opportunities and choreographic experiences. This class is also classified under physical education and when completed, the student receives physical education credit. Finally, there are performance dance program that offer dance curricula instructed by a highly qualified dance instructor who focuses on dance as a performing art. This type of class is structured around the California Dance Arts Standards and includes opportunities to create and perform dance. Unlike the other two types of dance classes, this is the only dance class classified under visual and performing arts. Upon completion of this type of class, the student receives arts credit instead of physical education credit. By providing dance within a framework of the dance standards and providing choreographic and performance opportunities, students can explore their imaginative abilities to tell a story or to express feelings or emotions while experiencing self-discovery. This research study exclusively focused on schools offering performing arts dance programs in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

To further examine the role dance education plays in California public schools, this research study involved collecting data concerned with student involvement in Tchaikovsky's ballet, *The Nutcracker*. In the doctoral dissertation, "The Annual *Nutcracker*. A Participant-Oriented, Contextualized Study of *The Nutcracker* Ballet as It Has Evolved into a Christmas Ritual in the United States and Canada," the ballet is discussed as a community and family favorite. Some reasons this ballet is a Christmas ritual is the nostalgia it evokes, the depiction of happy times, the presentation of an "old-fashioned," large family Christmas gathering that focuses on the wonder of children's excitement, and the fact that the performance event itself brings families together (Fisher 270). This particular production was selected to guide the

research study and evaluate correlational outcomes for a variety of reasons. Owing to the wide variety of roles in the ballet, the choreographer/instructor can structure dances so that beginners to advanced dancers can shine. The ballet, as well as its music, are strongly associated with the holiday season, often an annual tradition that is performed by numerous ballet companies and private dance schools each year, creating familiarity, and drawing a supportive following. The music is often considered as popular as the ballet itself. The Nutcracker Suite was prominently featured in Walt Disney's memorable classic film *Fantasia* in 1940. During the holiday season, it is heard everywhere—on television, in commercials, and as festive background music. This “spirit of Christmas” found in the ballet performance has dance students anticipating roles they wish to perform. Another benefit that this performance production provides is a chance for students, their family, and the school community to come together. For students in socioeconomically depressed areas that may not have the ability to enjoy the festivities of the holiday with the family, this performance provides them with an opportunity to enjoy and celebrate the “spirit of Christmas.”

The partnership between school, student, and family plays an essential role the success of the school's and student's achievement. Since The Nutcracker has evolved into a Christmas tradition, it provides a perfect conduit to draw in family and communities to establish positive community involvement. In the past, this researcher has had parents participate in the production in various aspects, including assisting with arrangements, altering costumes, checking costumes in and out backstage during performance, assisting students with hair and make-up, as well as volunteering to play Santa Claus for the community children to take pictures with. One parent even dressed up in her own elf costume to assist Santa Claus. This type of involvement enriches the experience for both students and community. Hence, the ballet performance not only allows

students the opportunity to enjoy a professional level production but also benefits parents, and community partners benefit from their relationship with the school. In this manner, The Nutcracker is a community show with a community effort.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research study was to present evidence supporting the benefits of providing low-income community public school students with a performing arts dance program. This was done by evaluating student participant's perspectives of how participating in the ballet performance has affected their attitude towards school, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and their creative process. Unlike most academic subjects where a question has a definite answer, dance offers an infinite possibility of answers and interpretations, enhancing a student's creativity and innovative thinking. When dance programs are structured as performing arts dance programs, students may have a greater potential to develop creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration which are crucial to every field of work, particularly in science and technology in the 21st century. Incorporating lessons based on creative skill building into curriculum is vital, and dance arts are an essential element to this type of holistic education. As author Emily Guerard noted the article in *Dance Major Journal*, "American society must prepare the next generation of creative minds by starting in the classroom and applying dance education to the curriculum" (3). Providing such a dance program challenges, engages, and better prepares students to advance themselves in the future.

It is important for the educational establishment to examine where and how the curriculum can better enhance the student's development of creativity. Recognizing the values of the arts, California has classified the arts as a core academic subject. California Education Code Section 8811, "defines the 'arts' to include the four disciplines of dance, drama and theatre, music, and visual arts . . ." (California Department of Education, "California" 1). Music, visual

arts, and theater arts are classified under their own academic fields and function within the established framework of the educational standards established. Consequently, not all dance classes are able to enhance a child's education; the need to distinguish what type of dance program is of significant value and encourages the development of performing arts dance programs to students is crucial when advocating for the inclusion of such programs. This research study focused on the value that a performing arts dance program can provide to the students and school community.

Another obstacle to a performing arts dance program is that dance education is too often a low priority for policy makers, school administrators, and sometimes even parents. Without adequate research and data, it is difficult to persuade principals, administrators, and school boards of the vital necessity of a performing arts dance program and its potential benefits to a student's growth. This research study has the potential to further the value of dance in public education by giving a voice to the students who have had the opportunity to express how their experiences in a performing arts dance program affected their education and life, which will help emphasize the need to increase the importance of dance within the school system. This research can also be a guide to the type of program that should be provided to all students. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- Q1 Do public schools in socioeconomic depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student engagement in school?
- Q2 Do public schools in socioeconomic depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student creativity, motivation, and involvement in school?

Significance of Study

The lack of clarity in what constitutes a dance arts program, and the misalignment of resources can prevent students from receiving the benefits of a performing arts dance program. As defined by this researcher, a performing arts dance program must have a highly qualified

“dance” educator who teaches dance within the established framework of the California Arts Standards for dance. The significance of this study is that the research will give a voice to the students who have experienced such a dance program whose mission is “to provide an exemplary arts and academic educational experience to students who have a passion for the arts, are culturally and socioeconomically diverse, and hail from across all of Los Angeles” (Los Angeles Unified School District 1). Bringing this type of strong performing arts dance program with quality technique, basic dance forms, and theater opportunities to low-income public schools that do not often have the necessary funds, resources, and opportunities, is equally important, if not more important, than providing these same opportunities to middle- and higher-income areas’ schools.

Dance class can help students approach challenges differently and think outside the box while engaging the mind, body, and spirit. Research supports that arts instruction increases the likelihood of a student attending and graduating high school, scoring higher on math and verbal SAT scores, earning a higher grade point average (GPA), as well as attending and finishing college. A research study by James Catterall, education professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, shows the impact of arts on student education. Some of Catterall’s key findings include:

(1) in two separate databases, students who had arts-rich experiences in high school showed higher GPAs than students who lacked those experiences; (2) high school students who earned no arts credits were five times more likely not to have graduated than students who earned many arts credits, and (3) arts-engaged high school students enrolled in competitive colleges—and in four-year colleges in general—at higher rates than did low arts-engaged students. (Bradley et al. 8-9)

Student motivation to attend school is affected by many factors, and research has shown that the arts have positively influenced students' attendance and involvement. In a study by Walker, Tabone, and Weltsek entitled, "When Achievement Data Meet Drama and Arts Integration," the researchers found that "participating in arts instruction predicts fewer absences from school among middle- and high-school students" (Rajan and O'Neal 151).

Even with this substantial research supporting the value and importance of dance education, many members on the Board of Education as well as some school administrators do not take dance education as seriously as other academic subjects. When district and school budget cuts are necessary, the arts are often the first field where cuts are made:

When school systems across the nation were confronted by fiscal crises precipitated by structural change in the economy, particularly in large urban areas, and resistance to taxes that fund public services such as education, school districts from coast to coast cut budgets, and arts education was one of the first places many of those districts chose to cut. (Rabkin and Hedberg 42-43)

The premise of this research was to present data that a performing arts dance program not only engages students in their academics but that it also enhances education by providing an outlet to develop creativity. Dance arts education can enrich every student socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Dance helps students learn to be unique and creative, qualities which may not be developed in the core subjects of reading and mathematics. The significance of creativity in the educational curriculum cannot be overstated.

Bringing a strong dance arts program with technical training, dance forms, and theater opportunities to underserved neighborhoods is important because parents in economically depressed areas do not have the discretionary funds to spend on sending their child to a private

dance school, nor do they have the means to support fundraisers by the school to help finance such a program. In 2012, the National Endowment for the Arts posted the results of James Catterall's decades of research on how the arts impact student learning. Included was the observation, "Children-at-risk (those with lower socioeconomic statuses, less family stability, etc.) benefit from arts-rich experiences in that they earn higher grades, are more likely to graduate from high school and further their education and become engaged learners and citizens" (Bradley et al. 9). This researcher sought to demonstrate the positive impact a performing arts dance program can have in the lives of students, particularly those in socioeconomically depressed area schools that do not often have access to such opportunities.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to present evidence supporting the benefits of providing low-income community public school students with a performing arts dance program.

Introduction

It is without question that the art of dance has widespread entertainment appeal. This can be seen on such Internet sites such as YouTube, Tic Toc, and Instagram. These websites also provide an excellent example of the educational value of the art of dance.

On the National Endowment for the Arts website, an article by Nick Rabkin and E.C. Hedberg remarks about the “rapid advances in technology have enabled more access to the arts events and arts creation through portable devices and the Internet” (9). Anyone can post their creative ideas, and millions of people have, from funny to impressively imaginative and innovative. This novel venue has allowed ordinary “non-experts” to be creative and explore ideas, feelings, and concepts and these creations demonstrate incredible untapped talent. People who still think that dance is not as important as reading, writing, and mathematics fail to recognize the transformative power of dance arts to improve creativity skills, increase confidence, expand communication skills, encourage community building, and help visual learners grasp concepts. Each of these skills is a valuable part of the education of a well-rounded student and are needed skills for employment. Employers seek a diverse set of talents in their

employees, and dance arts education provides an important element of that diversity. Donovan Walling writes about schools preparing art education teachers and shares that

according to a 1993 Arts Education Partnership Working Group study, the benefits of a strong art program include intensified student motivation to learn, better school attendance, increased graduation rates, improved multicultural understanding, and the development of higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. (1)

The arts have been part of the educational curriculum for centuries. History notes that as early as the period of ancient Greece, the Spartan warriors believed that the best military training involved educating the warriors in the art of dance. War dance played a significant role in the education of ancient Greeks. Art in education was also important in the Renaissance-era where it was believed that an arts education would improve society. This type of education was set apart from the whole of society. It was not until the 18th and 19th century that “governments began to fund free and, eventually, compulsory education for children” and “as the American school system grew larger and more complex, thinkers began developing more robust educational models” (Palmeri 1). An initial framework for integrating the arts into education was established by 1930. Then in 1962, the Kennedy administration created the Special Consultant on the Arts and by 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts was established to “provide leadership in arts education” (Palmeri 1). In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into law to provide “quality and equality” in education by providing additional resources for vulnerable students. The Goals 2000 Educate America Act, passed in 1994 by President Clinton, provided resources to states and communities to ensure that all students reach their full potential. With the passage of Goals 2000, the first National Standards for Arts Education were created that designated that art be included as part of the curriculum in

all schools (Ruppert 3). The passage of Goals 2000 put music, visual art, dance, and theater on equal status with all the other core subjects.

President George Bush enacted the No Child Left Behind Act 2001, which mandated testing and required schools to meet academic performance index growth rates. Schools began prioritizing funding into subject areas on standardized tests to meet the required growth targets, and consequently the support and importance of art education began to decline during this period. The National Endowment for the Arts website claims that “despite formal designation as one of ten ‘core subjects’ by the federal education legislation, there are some indications that the arts have been cut back in schools since the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act” (Rabkin and Hedberg 21). Public schools in areas of low-income and low-test scores eliminated arts education in favor of more time spent in reading and math, which further perpetuated the disproportionate access to the arts for African American and Latino students than White students (Rabkin and Hedberg 13, 47). *Critical Evidence: How the ARTS Benefit Student Achievement* asserts that “in schools across the country, opportunities for students to participate in high-quality arts instruction and activities are diminishing, the result of shifting priorities and budget cuts” and “poor, inner-city and rural schools bear a disproportionate share of the losses” (Ruppert 1). By 2015, President Obama signed into law Every Student Succeeds Act, which also sought to provide quality education for all students and reduce the federal test-based accountability of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes that even with all of these initiatives, acts, and laws, the achievement gaps remain wide between the social classes: The U.S. Department of Education website in the Equity of Opportunity web page discloses that “while one might expect schools in low-income communities to receive extra resources, the reverse is often true” (para.

3). The web page further notes that “45 percent of high-poverty schools received less state and local funding than was typical for other schools in their district” (U.S. Department of Education para. 3). Lack of funding and budget cuts have further disproportionately affected arts programs more severely than other fields. Even though the arts are a mandated core class, money was cut from the arts. In three years, from 2016 to 2019, the dance department at Grand Arts went from four teachers and multiple classes in many styles to two teachers with limited styles and fewer classes. This is an apparent consequence of the fact that “in California, despite statewide adoption of art standards for elementary students and implementation of arts requirements for high school graduation, state funding to support the arts has been eliminated or curtailed since 2003” (California Department of Education, “Funding” 3-4).

The Arts in Public School

Arts education, which includes music, visual arts, theater, and dance, has been part of the public education system for decades. Numerous research studies have shown the incredible benefits from the inclusion of arts education programs in schools. Arts education in schools has claimed to: foster an atmosphere of exploration and engagement, positively impact attention, increase student attendance, and decrease the drop-out rate. It is also indicated to promote growth of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-identity. Even though numerous studies tout the benefits of art education in schools, and the legislature designated the arts as a core subject, arts classes in California are not available to everyone.

In California, arts classes are often offered as electives or supplemental classes. Even with the mandates to include the arts as core subjects, the reality is that as years past, standardized testing and school budget reductions have put arts education at the forefront of cuts. National Endowment for the Arts website, James Catterall et al. discussed that “over the past

four decades, budget pressures and an increasing focus on just reading and math have crowded the arts out of too many school days” (5). The decline in California arts programs has not gone unnoticed. “The Sound of Silence: The Unprecedented Decline of Music Education in California Public Schools: A Statistical Review” cites that between 1999-2004 the total student enrollment in California public schools increased by 5.83%, yet student enrollment in arts education courses declined by 24.4%, or 461,806 students, during that same period (Music for All Foundation).

Despite a great deal of research showing that arts education supports student growth, arts departments are being eliminated. This education approach is detrimental for all students but is especially harmful to students who have been marginalized. The National Dance Education Organization researched how dance impacts learning in the 2004 *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation*, finding that several areas were under-researched including “the areas of Creative Process, Neuroscience/Brain Research, Student Achievement, Affective Domain, Student Performance, Equity, Cultural and World Dance, and Children-at-Risk” (Bradley et al. 5). This research study highlights three of these topics for students in underserved areas, including the effects on creativity, motivation, and positive school environment.

Effects on Creativity

Current school curriculum must respond to the changes in social and economic environments to help prepare students to develop lively, enquiring minds, and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to employment in this fast-changing world. Creativity is a vital component and skill necessary in fields as diverse as science, technology, engineering, math, as well as the arts. Creativity is not some special talent that some people have, and others do not. There are many theories of creativity. In this study, creativity is defined as a vehicle to develop new ideas. This view asserts that there is value in allowing students to identify and solve

problems, information that is already part of the body of knowledge (Jennings 34). Creativity engages and nurtures flexibility of the mind to generate ideas or envision possibilities to create a personal effort that is an original or distinctive idea. The research article, “Differences in Creativity Across Art and STEM Students: We Are more Alike than Unalike,” asserts:

Creativity is general in nature – it is essentially a multi-faceted competency that involves similar attitudes, disposition, skills, and knowledge, all transferrable from one situation to another. So, whether you’re in art, math, or engineering, you’ll share an openness to new ideas, divergent thinking, and a sense of flexibility. (“Which is more creative, the arts or the sciences?” para. 1)

This research reveals how creativity in science and in the arts are remarkably similar. Evidence like this supports the concept of implementing a universal approach to teaching creativity in schools. The value of dance is demonstrated in the thesis “The Value of Choice: An Exploratory Case Study on the Intrinsic Motivation of Dance Students Within the Creative Process,” which contends that dance aids in developing creative skills by: “(1) encouraging divergent movement responses; (2) engaging transformation of ideas into creating a dance; (3) inviting the sharing of ideas; (4) guiding students’ elaboration” (Giguere 10).

Effects on Motivation

Research supports the valuable connection between arts education and student motivation in school. *Critical Evidence: How the ARTS Benefit Student Achievement* explained that “the arts nurture a motivation to learn by emphasizing active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence and risk taking, among other competencies” (Ruppert 14). In the article, “Performance and Motivation in Dance Education,” motivation is defined as an “internal process that initiates, guides, and perpetuates behavior over time” (Lazaroff 25). It is interesting to note

that word “motivation” is a derivative of the Latin word “movere” which means “to move,” and motivation requires some type of action, be it physical or mental. In education, instructional methods that motivate learners to meet desirable outcomes is a common concern of teachers. Motivation stimulates students to move forward and drives behaviors. Extrinsic motivation is driven by outside elements, while intrinsic motivation is driven by internal elements. Extrinsic motivation usually involves engagement in an activity to obtain some external reward, while intrinsic motivation is usually described as an activity that one will engage in for the enjoyment it provides. When a student is intrinsically motivated to dance, it is the activity of dancing that is the reward. An example of extrinsic motivation in dance can be seen in requiring a passing grade point average in all classes to participate in a dance performance.

Dance is a good example of how a thinking, moving, and deeply absorbed student creates a bond between dance and motivation. Dancing engages the student in the learning process, allowing them to deal with uncertainty and discovery while using the whole body. Concentrating on the steps, the sequencing of the steps, not being self-conscious of being watched, and losing track of time are elements that add to enhancing motivation. In the journal article, “Performance and Motivation in Dance Education” revealed three factors that make dance a good place to look for the understanding of motivation which have implications for education: “(1) the potential of the body to enhance learning; (2) the use of imitation, repetition, and physical engagement; and (3) a variety of performances of learning” (Lazaroff 27). Arts education is also important for engaging and motivating students at risk. Students at risk of dropping out cite their participation in the arts as a reason for staying in school (Ruppert 14).

Positive School Environment

Another aspect that affects student motivation is how the school and the classes are structured and the type of school environment. A positive school environment is vital to academic success. Numerous research studies have shown that a positive school environment results in better attendance, increased motivation to learn, higher test scores and graduation rates, and promotes character development and psychological wellbeing. A report from the Arts Education Partnership which highlights the benefits of arts learning lists three ways that arts improve schools: “(1) the arts improve school climate; (2) the arts comprehensive tasks challenge students; (3) the arts turn school into communities” (Longley 16).

Expecting professionalism from the students in a dance classroom, as well as providing them with excellent technique and a meaningful performance, are qualities that effect motivation. Classroom etiquette helps provide a safe, respectful environment that provides students with the opportunity to express themselves without fear. When students are properly dressed and on time, understand that they must communicate with each other respectfully and come to class physically and mentally prepared, this creates a more positive and accepting classroom environment that encourages the motivation to attend class. A positive school environment is essential because no one can learn in an environment where they feel bullied or unsafe, particularly in a creative and self-revealing setting. In a report by Sandra Ruppert, she shares that “the arts help create the kind of learning environment conducive to teacher and student success by fostering teacher innovation, a positive professional culture, community engagement, increased student attendance, effective instructional practice, and school identity” (14).

Dance as a Core Subject

Students' access to arts education as well as the level of instruction in public schools are not equivalent in the arts disciplines offered nor in the qualifications of the educator teaching the classes. The study, "Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 1999–2000 and 2009–10," examined the arts instruction students receive, the facilities and resources available, instructional practices, and whether instruction was received from an arts specialist or a non-arts teacher (Parsad 1). This study found that "while school-level indicators of dance education are similar to the indicators for music and visual arts education . . . separate surveys of dance specialists were not included in the study because the percentage of schools with these specialists on staff was relatively small" (Parsad 40). The study also claims that in the 2009–10 school year 3% of elementary schools and 12% of secondary schools offered dance whereas in 1999–2000 20% of elementary schools and 14% of secondary school offered dance (Parsad 40, 43). Another study, *Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting* cites "57% of U.S. elementary students do not have access to dance education and that, of the 43% of students who do, 36% receive dance training from physical education and 7% receive their training from dance professionals" (Bradley et al. 34).

Dance is inclusive and correlates with diverse expression and cultures. Dance practice involves mastering the use of one's body and developing one's capacity for communicating emotion. Mastering the use of the body to express feelings develops self-confidence. Because dance is an expressive exploration and creation of meaning through the use of the body, it is in no way related to the central characteristic of physical education. Authors Lynn Hartle et al. discuss in the *Early Childhood Education Journal* that "the arts engage the brain and the body in a fully integrated system of learning where sensory information is mapped throughout our whole

body; feelings, senses, and thoughts are connected; and the emotional content of the experience make the memory cognitively powerful” (292). A failure to recognize the importance of dance education under the umbrella of creative arts denies students the opportunity to explore their creative potential.

All the arts provide a potential for expression of personal and universal qualities. The arts provide a direct influence on imagination with dance adding its own special qualities. Each art is a mode that offers its own unique understanding. Visual arts use the visual mode of light, color, and images. Music uses the aural mode of sounds and rhythms. Dance uses kinesthetic modes of body movements. A properly balanced education, one seeking to fully explore and develop the potential of each student, should provide opportunities to work in all of these modes of creative education.

Dance makes a distinctive contribution to the education of all students in that it involves movement, one of the most fundamental modes of human expression, and its instruction contributes to the academic curriculum in many ways. Students advance artistically and aesthetically through the development of creative thought, action, and performance skills. Dance enhances cultural education by providing access to a rich diversity of different cultural dance forms and understanding the value attached to the dance. It contributes to personal and social growth by providing opportunities to explore the relationship between feeling, values, and expressions while working with others. Being a physical activity, it contributes to health and fitness. Dance as a creative art is a valuable part of the curriculum, and in these times of so many economic cutbacks, it is important to maintain the momentum for dance as a core subject within the national curriculum.

Community and the Arts

Art communicates across all languages and cultures and reveals stories from the past and present, inspiring both young and old. Art adds to a community by providing for opportunities of expression and interaction, enhancing the environment, engaging the youth in the community, and creating a cultural heritage. Dance enhances people's sense of community by expanding social and cultural interaction, thereby creating stronger communities and a feeling of togetherness.

Community and Dance

A perfect example of how dance can create a strong sense of community is the development of the dance genre, Hip Hop. By the 1970s, the South Bronx of New York was abandoned by the federal and city governments. Afro-American youth in this neighborhood were a forgotten, deserted, and ignored minority (Johnson para. 7). However, by the mid-1970s into the early 1980s, a new form of dance that became known as breakdancing, and later evolving into what is now called hip-hop dancing, was created by the Afro-American youth in that neighborhood. Johnson states that "social choreography of the South Bronx youth . . . was counter to an expectation of their invisibility" (Johnson para. 7). The youth of the neighborhood had an abundant amount of energy, and dance became the perfect vehicle to keep violence off the streets and allow rival groups to challenge each other in dance competitions.

Hip hop is a dance genre that involves athleticism, creativity, and soul. This form of dance emerged from hip hop music and was used as a way of battling neighborhood crews to show superiority. In African culture, music and dance have always been linked. This form of dance became associated with the "ghetto," "outlaw culture," and battling. Television shows, movies, and the internet of the 1990s and 2000s contributed to commercializing hip hop and

introducing it to the world. This further expanded the growth of hip hop, not only in culture of the United States but throughout the world.

What began as a community's attempt to settle territorial disputes and way of battling neighborhood crews to show superiority, turned into a creatively innovative dance form that defined a community and found a place in performances around the world. The creative energy from that community created a dance that is now widely enjoyed and appreciated.

The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker also has the same ability to draw communities together. The lives of young people in socioeconomically depressed areas often lack a nurturing community to spur them on towards a better life. Often, school becomes a student's community. Arts programs can make a dramatic difference in an individual student's social, behavioral, emotional, and academic health. A school performing arts dance program, and the annual Nutcracker, can provide students with a realistic ladder of progression as class placement and roles are assigned by skill level. Being given the opportunity to advance through various stages of dance levels and roles provides students with incentive and motivation to achieve, not only in dance, but in their other classes as well, since performance in a show is tied to grade point average. Having the ability to perform in the ballet gives the students a purpose, increases self-esteem, provides a sense of belonging, and can offer some sense of the holiday spirit.

Ultimately, The Nutcracker production is proof that music and dance can influence people through time and a spectrum of cultures. The ballet's strong association with the holiday season in the United States has many families seeking to see the production year after year. Some people even feel the holiday is not complete without enjoying a local production of the ballet. This performance depicts happy families onstage, can enhance family relationships

offstage, and can even create a family-like closeness on the part of the audience. It nurtures feelings of peer and community togetherness, and has a special resonance for all participants, including the dancers, teachers, and the audience.

Underserved Communities and the Arts

When students do not have access to arts education, they lose out on an important creative outlet and can face a greater struggle in mastering educational concepts, will confront a higher likelihood of dropping out, and are prone to developing discipline problems. The communities that need arts education the most are most often the communities that have the least. An article on the National Endowment for the Arts website describes that “Analysis of 1992 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts data showed that socioeconomic status is the strongest determinant of obtaining and arts education” (Rabkin and Hedberg 41). Underserved populations have less access to arts programs because of a lack or limited access to quality arts resources and opportunities due to geographic isolation and economic status. Public school arts programs are vital in low-income areas as equity can only be achieved when all students have the opportunity to participate, prosper, and achieve their full potential. Rabkin and Hedberg found that “the decline of childhood arts education among white children is relatively insignificant, while the declines for African American and Hispanic children are quite substantial—49% for African American and 40% for Hispanic children” (15-16).

Developing the arts with the community and celebrating the culture of the community are vital factors in creating an equitable starting point because they embody the creative assets within that community. Public school arts programs can give children in these underserved communities a voice and freedom to imagine and create the world they want to live in. In a study by Boykin and Cunningham, it was found that African American children’s overall performance

was significantly better under a “High Movement Expression” than in a “Low Movement Expression” learning context, so if “non-white children learn best through kinesthetic experiences, as all of these studies indicate, then they will be “left behind” in a world of seat-based and passive learning” (Bradley et al. 10). As standardized test-based accountability focused funding on tested subject areas, the percentage of students receiving arts education diminished, and this was devastating to non-white students. The study, “What the Decline Means for Arts Participation,” reveals:

Some studies have found that arts learning has a more significant effect on low-income student achievement than it does on the academic performance of more privileged students, and that arts education is an effective pathway to deeper engagement and success in school for students who are at the greatest risk of academic failure. (Rabkin and Hedberg 21)

Finally, *Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting* observed that “children-at-risk (those with lower socioeconomic statuses, less family stability, etc.) benefit from arts-rich experiences” and that the “arts make education more equitable for all, regardless of the external circumstances” (Bradley et al. 9). This evidence exemplifies the crucial need for arts education in underserved populations. Bradley et al. also presents evidence that “if children-at-risk are primarily kinesthetic learners, their ability to move in an organized, refined, and predictive way might be key to engagement, retention, and perseverance at task” (48). In the shifting landscape of American education, arts education in underserved public schools must be considered in the forefront for education equality.

Students' Perceptions in Dance Education

Students, teachers, and parents have unique perspectives and evaluate information differently; therefore, it is important to examine the student's perceptions in regard to the value of providing dance education. Only a small fraction of arts education research includes the perceptions of students regarding their opportunity to participate in dance arts education. In reviewing the literature, a few studies were found on perceptions of dance whose participants were college students, and few studies were found where the participants were elementary students. The only resource found discussing high school reflections in dance was in *Embodied Curriculum Theory and Research in Arts Education: A Dance Scholar's Search for Meaning*, a book containing a collection of research articles (Stinson). Chapter 16, "Voices of Young Women Dance Students: An Interpretive Study of Meaning in Dance," presents a research study of participants between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who shared their thoughts about how they perceive dance (Stinson 199-218). The research article in Chapter 17, "Meaning and Value: Reflecting on What Students Say About School," investigates how high school students in dance make sense of their experiences (Stinson 219-242). This article identified two major themes: "one having to do with relationships (with dance classes often described as a safe and idealized home and/or family, providing supportive teacher and peer relationships)," and "the second with how students construct meaning and value from their school experiences" (Stinson 219).

These findings are especially important to students in socioeconomically depressed areas because there is a high incidence of single-family parenting or those struggling for a place to call home. Although most research and reasons for supporting the arts is devoted to cognitive research, this research seeks to investigate the affective dimensions of learning as well as the cognitive. The field of education is involved in helping the student research their full potential.

Consequently, it is important to develop not only 21st century skills but those that enhance social and self-efficacy as well. Providing students with a performing arts dance education can promote academic as well as psychological benefits.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Perspective and Type

The purpose of this research project was to discover if a performing arts dance program enhances student engagement in school and advances student creativity, motivation, and involvement. Both qualitative and quantitative data were reviewed and analyzed to reach conclusions about the initial research questions. This methodology section presents information about the research context, participants, instrument used in data collection, data collection process, and the research procedure.

Research Context

Two California schools in Los Angeles were selected as sites to conduct this research. School 1 and School 2 are designated as Title I in socioeconomically depressed areas where this researcher previously taught. At each school, The Nutcracker ballet was staged with student dancers for the school and community to enjoy. An online survey was used as the research instrument and was only offered to the students in the two selected schools who performed in the annual production of ballet. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures, and time constraints while conducting this research, the ability to reach prior students was limited and unfortunately no one from one of the two schools responded. Permission to conduct master's research at School 1 was given on October 12, 2020 (see Appendix A). Permission to conduct the research at School 2 was not necessary because the participants involved in the ballet were all

alumni and no research would have been done at the school. Approval was then obtained from the University of Northern Colorado's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A).

School 1 is a Title 1 performing arts public high school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Minority enrollment was 87% with 77% of the student body coming from economically disadvantaged households as determined by eligibility of students for California's Free and Reduced-Price Meal program. The school has four arts divisions: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Admission to all programs requires no prior training, nor auditions. Dance at School 1 is an integral part of a student's education. Students in the Dance Academy take classes in ballet, jazz, tap, hip hop, cultural dance, and choreography, and there are no fees or tuition for students who attend these schools or participate in performances.

Research Participants

Current and former students from both School 1 and School 2 who participated in The Nutcracker were eligible to participate in this research study. As previously noted, no students from School 2 responded. The students at School 1 were more accessible and responsive. School 1's student body is culturally diverse and has students with varying degrees of dance ability. The majority of the students who responded to the survey performed in the 2018 Nutcracker, however, some had danced in the 2017, 2016, and 2012 productions of the ballet (see figure 3.1).

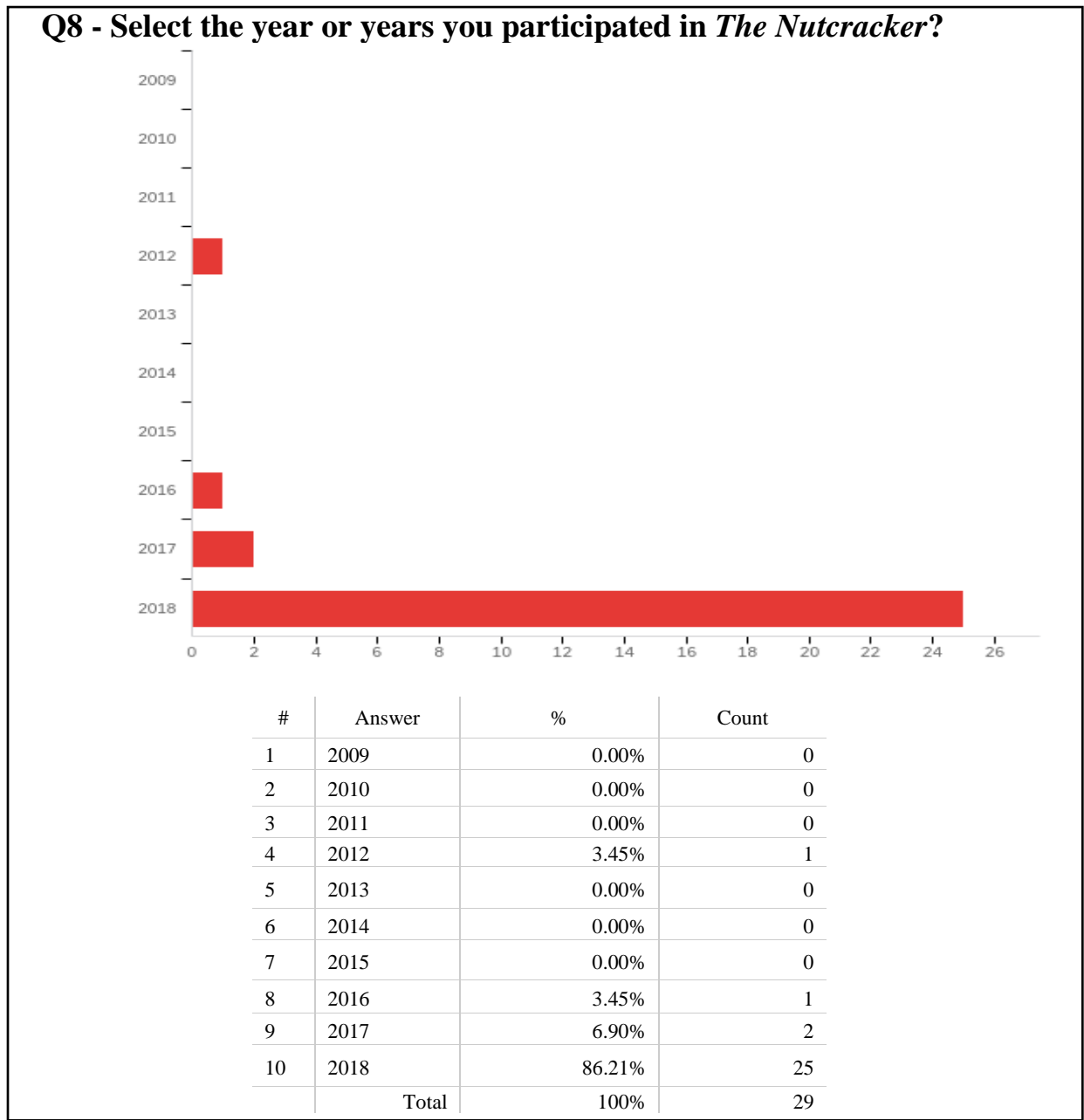


Fig. 3.1. Year of *The Nutcracker* participation.

Instrument Used in Data Collection

The instrument used to collect data for this study consisted of an online survey administered via the Qualtrics software program. The structure of the survey allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The survey consisted of twenty-eight questions. Fourteen questions required students to answer multiple-choice questions, two of which allowed students to provide an additional written response. The first fourteen questions were aimed at gathering general demographic information about the type of student participating in this study, including their reason for attending a performing arts dance academy. The remaining fourteen questions required the participant to express their feelings, experiences, attitudes, and emotions about attending a performing arts dance program and specifically performing in *The Nutcracker*. The last fourteen questions gathered data about the participant's thoughts to help determine the value of providing a performing arts dance program in a socioeconomically depressed school. The answers to these questions helped determine the ways in which a performing arts dance program and the ballet contribute to a students' academic and emotional growth. The multi-choice section of the survey ascertained background information such as attitudes toward a dance art program and dance class experiences prior to enrollment in a formal dance program. Short answer response questions asked about the students' experiences performing in the ballet and what effect it had on them and their education. When structuring the survey, the researcher believed that it was important to receive not just background information but elicit student's thoughts and feelings about dance and their thoughts about attending a performing arts school. Consequently, the resulting data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Qualtrics software presented data in two different ways. Through the first method, the responses were anonymously classified by respondent which were arranged by the date and time each participant responded to the survey. The researcher changed the identification of each respondent from date and time sorting, to Dancer 1, Dancer 1, etc. for easier reference. The second method grouped responses with no distinction of respondent. The data were organized by question. It was in this second classification of data where the Qualtrics software analyzed the information quantitatively.

Data Collection Process

Data collection for this research project was performed between December, 2020, and May, 2021 on the Qualtrics website. The recruitment notices informed participant volunteers that in order to participate in the study they had to have danced in a production of The Nutcracker at either School 1 or School 2 between 2009 and 2018. There were thirty-five participants who completed the survey. Twenty-seven were current students at School 1 and eight were alumni (see figure 3.2).

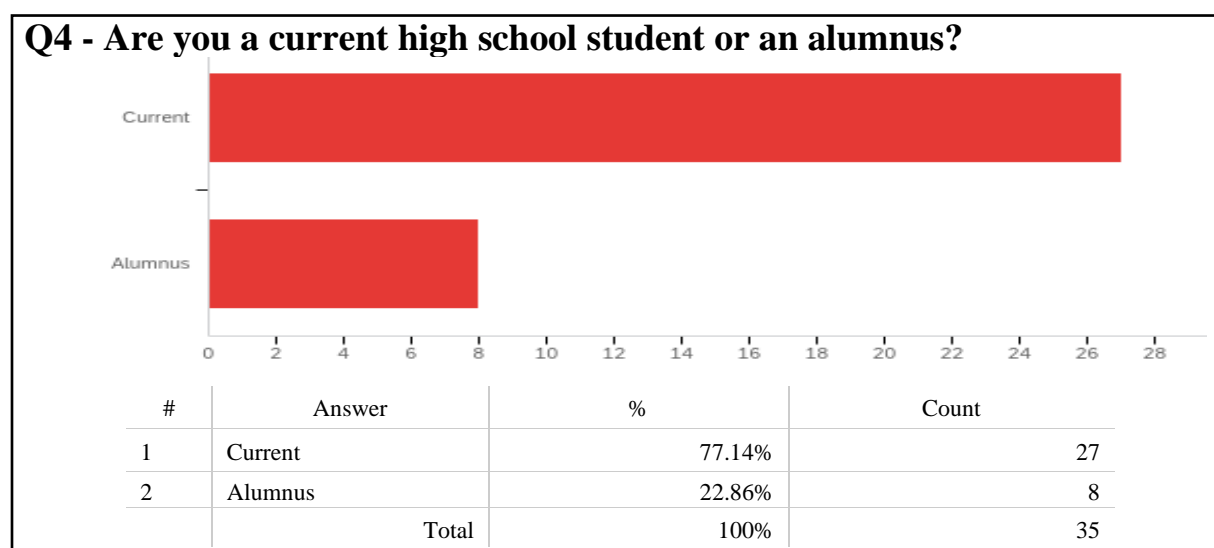


Fig. 3.2. Current student or alumnus.

As stated previously, only students who performed in any previous presentation of *The Nutcracker* were eligible to participate in the survey. To recruit participants for this study, a recruitment letter was posted on School 2's Schoology platform, a learning management system accessible only to faculty, students, and parents, which manages classroom activities and assignments and has a discussion platform to allow collaboration with peers. The researcher announced in each 2020-2021 Zoom virtual classroom that participants were being sought for a master research study project at the University of Northern Colorado and were directed to the Schoology website for more information. Reaching and recruiting alumni who had performed in the ballet proved more difficult. Having no access to any confidential information for past students, the only way to reach out to former students was to post the notice on the researcher's personal website. The notice stated that participants should be willing to share their experiences about attending a high school with a dance program as well as their experiences participating in the ballet. Current students or alumni who expressed an interest in completing the research had the opportunity to ask any questions and were given a description of the goals and parameters of the study. Participants over the age of 18 signed their consent online via the Qualtrics site (see Appendix B). Students between the age of fifteen to seventeen who expressed an interest in the study were required to have a signed parent or guardian consent as well as sign their own informed consent before participating in the study (see Appendix B). If a parent or guardian had any questions, they were directed to email the researcher directly, although no one found that necessary. The activities for this research project were conducted outside of classroom and school time. There was no personal sharing of information, and this research was not discussed during Zoom classroom time except for the announcement that the research project was being conducted and that participants were being sought. Communication was done only via the

internet. No student found it necessary to request clarification of any information on or about the survey.

Students completed the survey at their own convenience outside of school hours (see Appendix C). Privacy was strictly guarded throughout the study. In recording data, and in this report, participants were referred to as Dancer 1, Dancer 2, etc. The research report, including the written thesis that the study is based on, does not contain any information that will make it possible to identify any of the participants.

The collected data were stored on an external flash drive and secured in the researcher's home safe. There were no physical copies of the consent forms printed. At the conclusion of this research the flash drive was sent to the University of Northern Colorado for storage. This researcher was the sole investigator.

Research Procedure

The procedure used to collect information for this study consisted of viewing the information using the Qualtrics Data and Analysis and Reports tools. These tools aided in generating quantitative data based on the participants' responses. Qualitative data were more difficult to evaluate and analyze with the Qualtrics software.

In the report section, where information was grouped by questions, each participant's answer was listed with no identification tag to connect the participant to the response. Care had to be taken in reviewing the survey to keep track of which respondent provided each response. Numbers were assigned from one to thirty-five to identify respondents. Each response was then placed in a table and organized into a chart using Excel. The chart allowed the researcher to identify the written answers from Dancer 1 to Dancer 35. The chart was organized and reviewed for emerging themes.

Data Analysis Procedure

The goal of organizing this data analysis was to evaluate and arrange information to shed light on whether or not the original research questions were valid. The quantitative data were assessed using the Qualtrics software which generated bar graphs and percentage breakdowns of each question. Data listed under the Report tool provided a bar graph for the answers to each multiple-choice question as well as information about the minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, variance, and count analysis of each question as well as percentages. Qualitative information was evaluated by reading responses to identify common themes in reference to the research questions. The researcher identified common themes of motivation, creativity growth, personal growth, and engagement/involvement in school that were mentioned in participants' answers that related to the research questions. These answers were correlated to answer the research study questions. The analysis of this data can be found in the next chapter.

Summary

The methodology used in this research study focused on the discovery of data and themes related to the thesis research questions. The survey was designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative information while participants remained anonymous. Quantitative data were collected and presented in the form of bar graphs generated by the Qualtrics software. Qualitative data were analyzed for emerging themes related to the original research questions. The number of times that the participants responded in the same or similar ways was identified and presented in the next chapter. The outcome of this research is provided in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Introduction

As stated in the introduction, the aim of this research was to investigate how participating in The Nutcracker enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools by means of questioning the students who participate in such a school program.

The researcher sought to answer the following research questions:

- Q1 Do public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student engagement in school?
- Q2 Do public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advance student creativity, motivation, and involvement in school?

This chapter presents the outcome from the survey using both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data from the survey's multi-choice questions were assessed quantitatively, while data from the written responses were analyzed qualitatively. The themes that emerged are also presented in this chapter.

Outcome of Data Analysis

The outcome of this research positively supported the goals of this study. School 1 is located in a socioeconomically depressed area that integrates a strong academic program along with a performing arts dance program. The study verified that this school is exemplary in providing a substantial and effective academic program which promotes student achievement, contributes to students reaching their personal potential, increases motivation to attend school, advances engagement in school, and promotes creativity. Participants in this study

overwhelmingly voiced their love of dance and their desire to attend a performing arts dance program.

Quantitative Data

As stated previously, all students who responded to the survey were from School 1 (see figure 4.1). When students enroll in the school, they can choose between four different arts academies: Dance, Music, Art, and Theater. Students do not always end up being placed in the academy of their choice; however, these students are able to move academies in the first weeks of the school year. This researcher thought it was worthy of noting that three students who responded to the survey did not initially choose the performing arts dance academy but they decided to remain in the academy and participate in the performance (see figure 4.2).

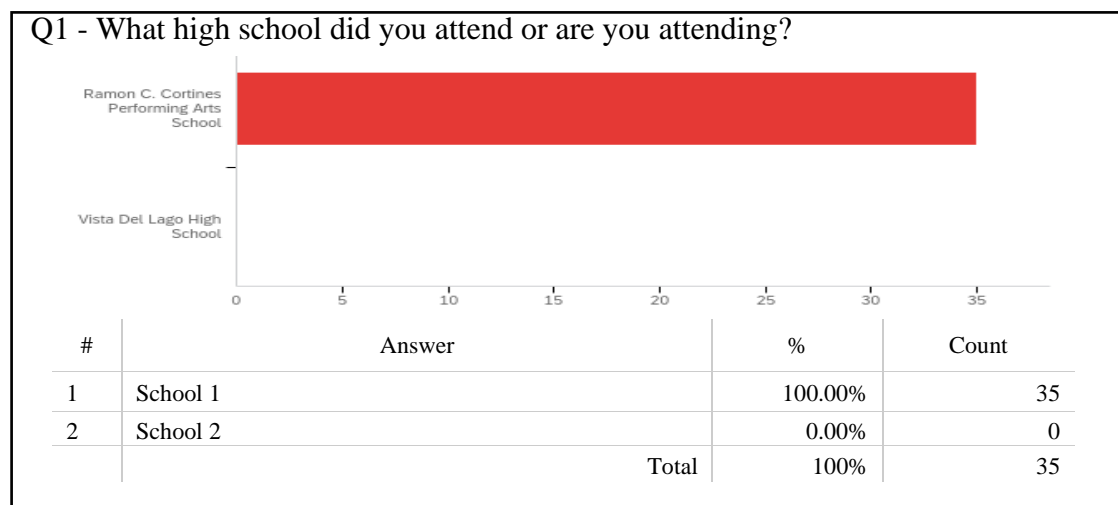


Fig. 4.1. Participant's school of attendance.

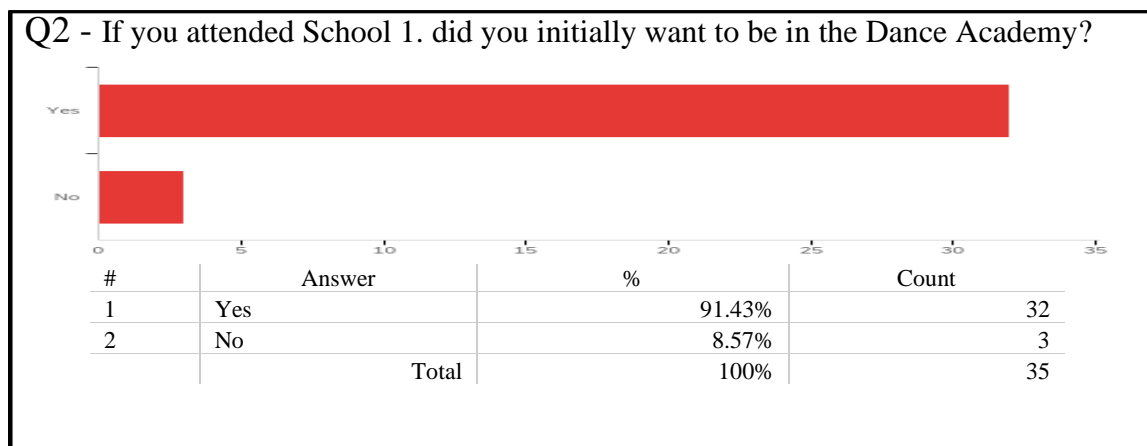


Fig. 4.2. Choice of academy.

Figure 4.3 shows that the vast majority of participants who entered high school had previous dance experience, and figure 4.4 reveals these participants even had experience in various styles of dance. In addition, most participants received dance training with performance opportunities. Only four participants who responded had no previous experience in dance. A closer look at the data in figure 4.5 shows that nearly all of these participants received their dance training and performance opportunities from their public schools. The fact that 65.52% of students depend on their public school to obtain experience in the performing arts dance program further emphasizes the value of offering dance as part of the core curriculum. Budget cuts and elimination of performing arts dance programs in socioeconomically depressed public schools have the potential of prohibiting access to the majority of students.

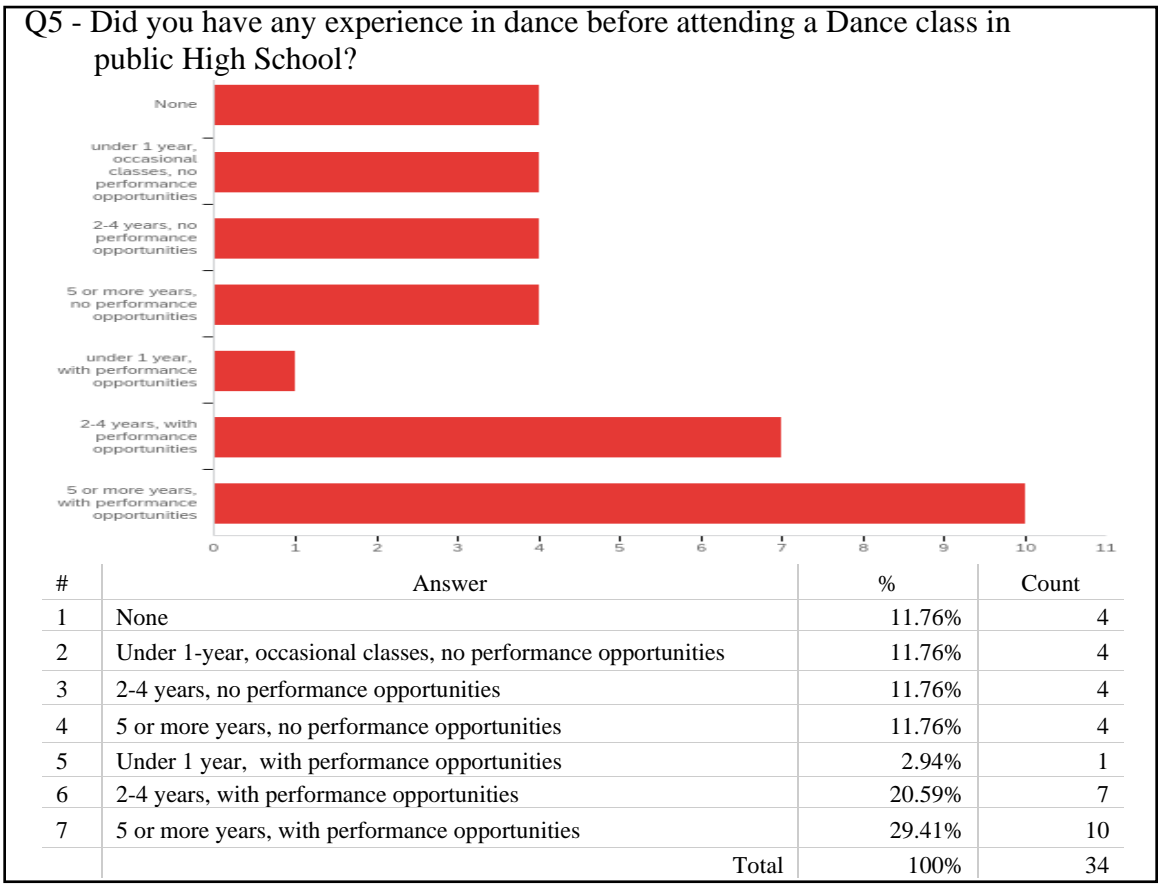


Fig. 4.3. Prior dance training.

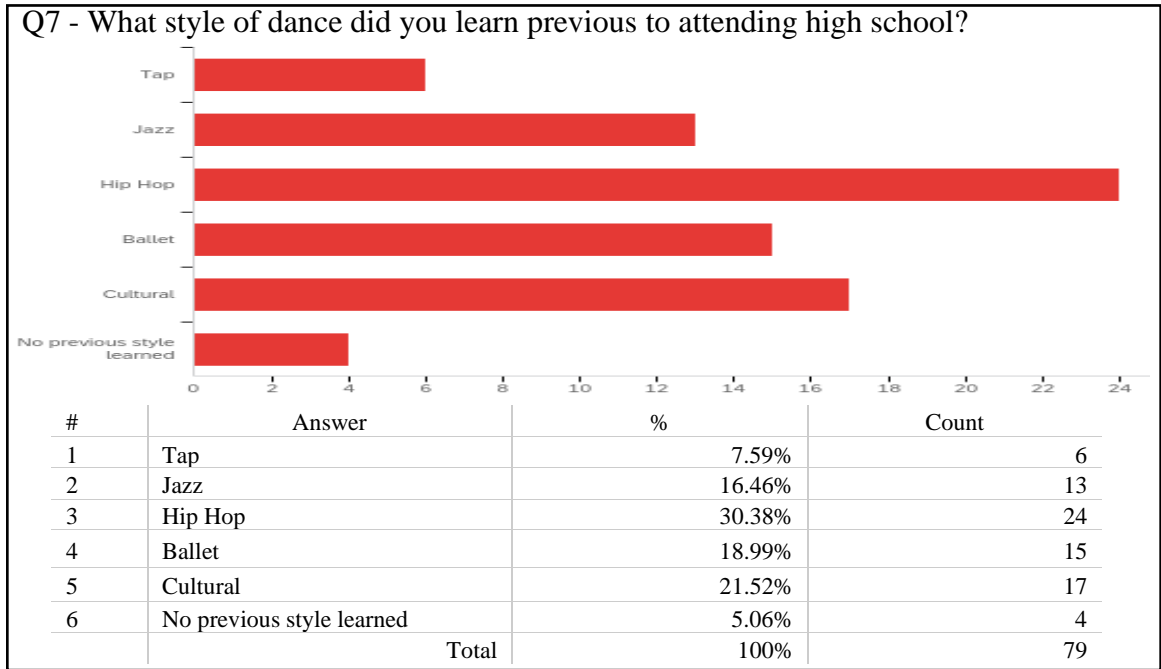


Fig. 4.4. Styles of dance learned.

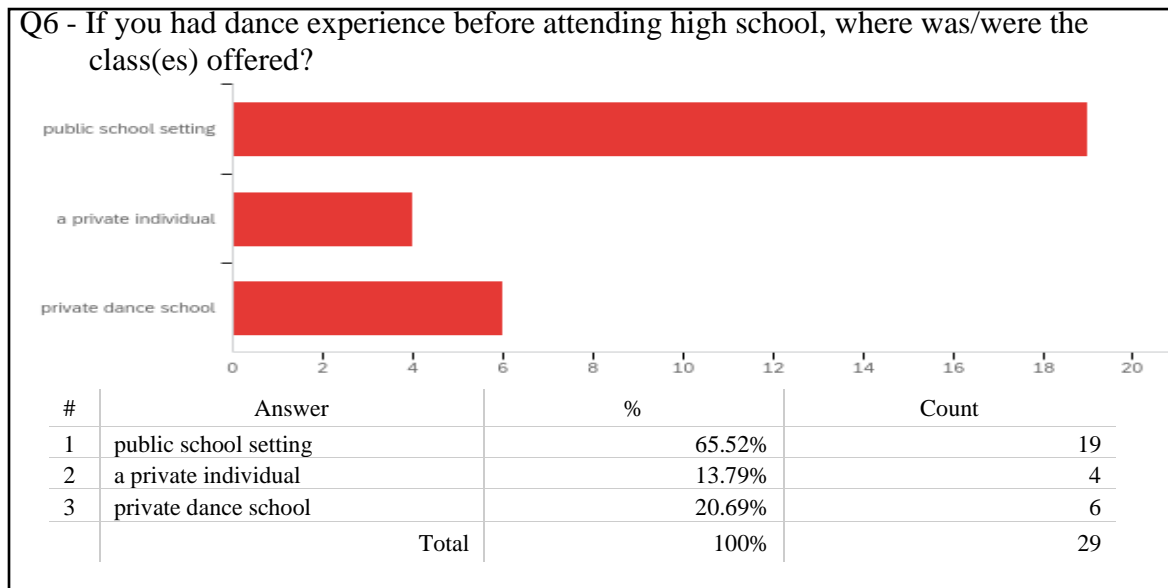


Fig. 4.5. Where dance experience acquired.

Motivation

An objective of this research was to examine student motivation to attend a dance school when the student has the opportunity to perform in a full-scale professional production. Motivation is one of the reoccurring themes that was mentioned in various ways throughout the survey and is an important aspect that inspires students to do well in school. Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivations are internal forces that motivate an individual to engage in a goal directed behavior, whereas extrinsic motivation involves factors such as rewards or punishments. An intrinsic motivation factor can be seen in question 14 (see figure 4.8) while an extrinsic motivation factor can be seen in question 15 (see figure 4.9).

Figure 4.6 revealed that only 2.59% of the participants have neither seen nor heard of *The Nutcracker*, where 79.41% had known of the performance or had seen it. Although 20% of participants had limited to no knowledge with the ballet, once they performed in the production, thirty-one out of thirty-two participants revealed that performing in the ballet motivated them to want to participate in it again (see figure 4.7). This internal motivation to perform in the ballet again reveals how such a performance can motivate a student to keep good attendance and good grades. When asked, “Did a GPA requirement to perform in *The Nutcracker* make you strive to do better in school,” twenty-six of thirty-two students answered affirmatively that this requirement had motivated them (see figure 4.8). The GPA requirement did, in fact, encourage students to do better in school with 81.25% answering positively. The six students who responded negatively could have distinct reasons for responding this way including the possibility that they already had a high GPA. This GPA school requirement to perform in the ballet demonstrates how an extrinsic motivation factor can also motivate students to keep good attendance and good grades. Figure 4.9 addresses whether dance class and performing in *The*

Nutcracker helped the student become more successful in other school subjects. Twenty-eight students responded, “definitely yes” and “probably yes,” only two students answered, “probably no” or “definitely no,” and three had no opinion either way. Hence, 84.84% replied positively that dance class and/or performing in the ballet helped them become more successful in other subjects in school. Each of these questions support that schools in socioeconomically depressed areas with a performing arts dance program can advance student motivation.

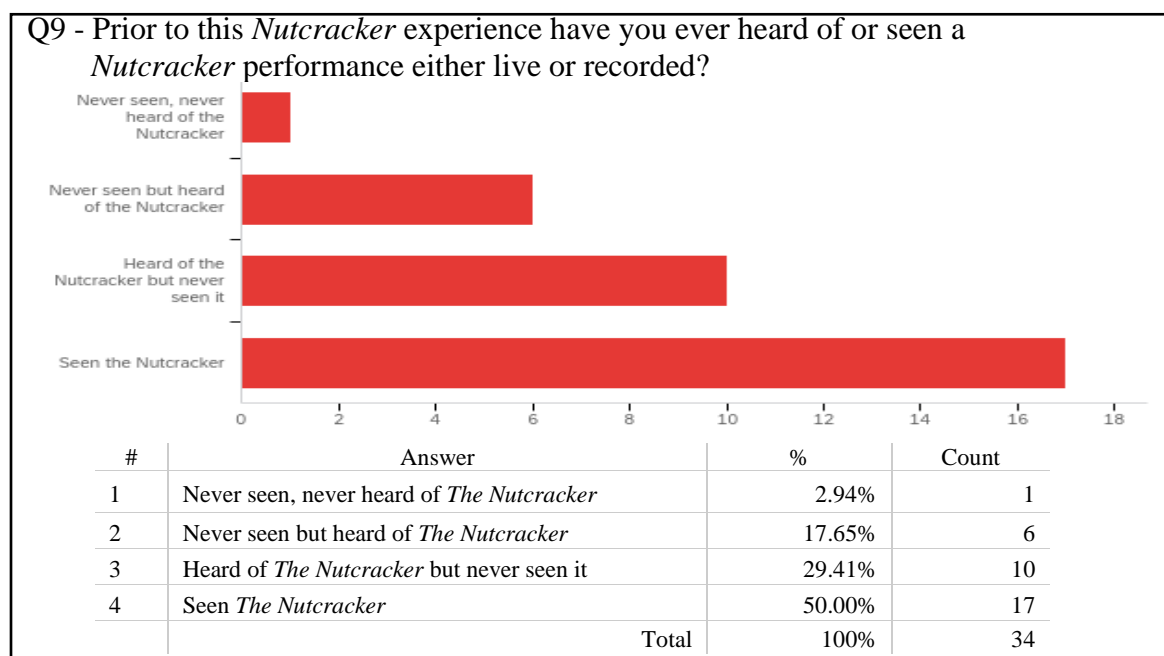


Fig. 4.6. Prior knowledge of *The Nutcracker*.

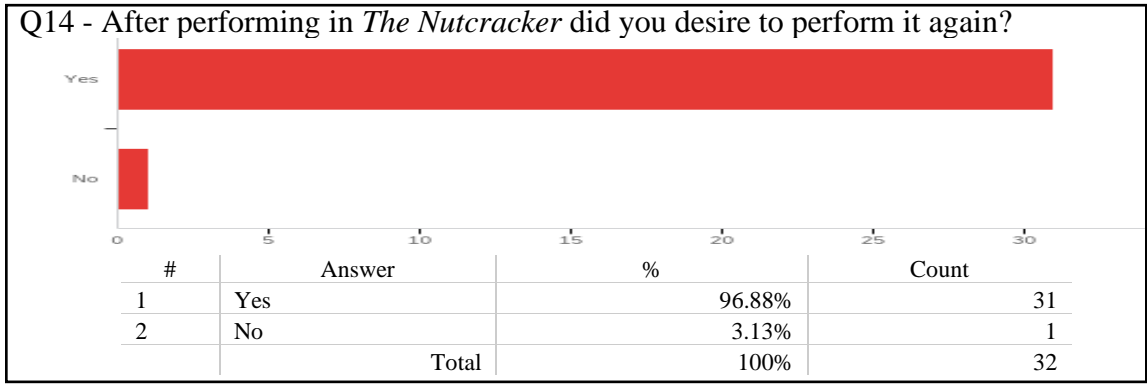


Fig. 4.7. Desire to perform *the Nutcracker* again.

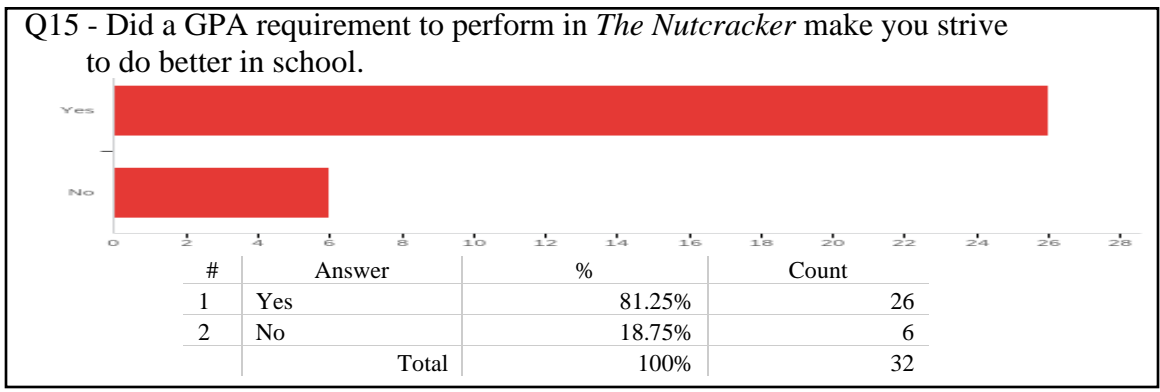


Fig. 4.8. Grade point average requirement.

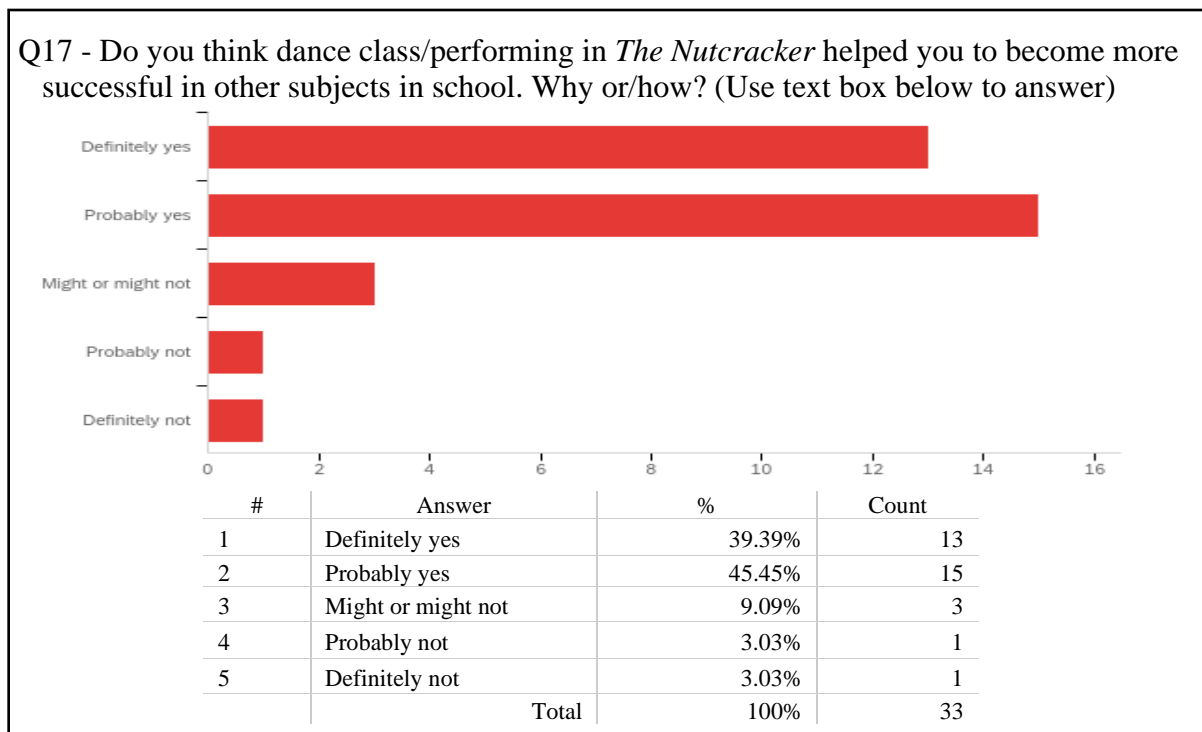


Fig.4.9. *The Nutcracker* and other school subjects.

Creativity Growth

Most of the survey that addressed creative growth was discussed in the qualitative section; however, one multiple-choice question that can be classified under creative growth that addresses how each student felt the ballet changed their perspectives on dance, art, life etc. In figure 4.10, only one participant out of thirty-five responded that performing in the ballet did not change his or her creative outlook. With a total of seventy-two replies for only thirty-five respondents, results revealed that many students identified in multiple ways that the ballet helped them develop more creatively in emotional expressiveness, richness, and colorfulness of imagery, extending or breaking emotional boundaries.

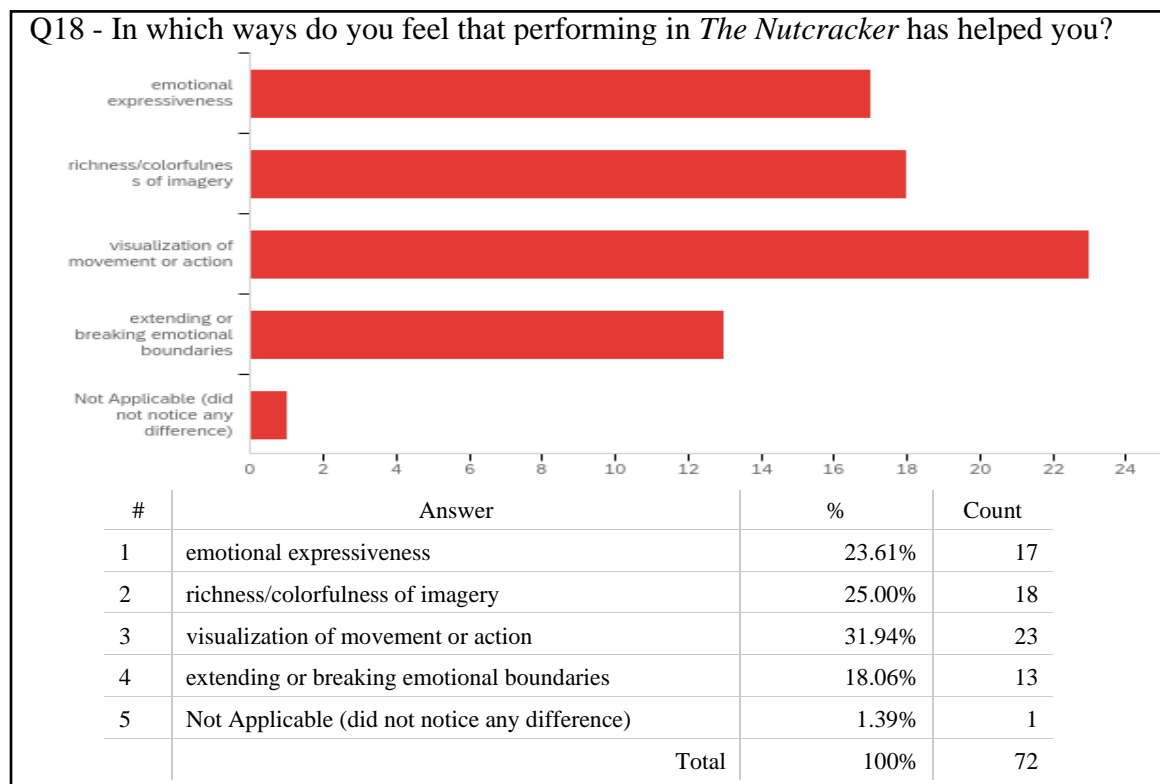


Fig. 4.10. Way *The Nutcracker* changed perspectives.

Engagement/Involvement Growth

The importance of collaboration between schools, students, and family is a vital component of student success in school. Another important objective of this research study was to investigate how the ballet performance affected the students' and families' engagement and involvement in school community. The data collected strongly support that the ballet helped increase students' engagement and involvement in school. A student's social, emotional, and academic growth have a better opportunity to develop with a strong student, teacher, and parent involvement.

Figure 4.11 presents student's responses to the question of community and friends' attendance at *The Nutcracker*. The question was structured so students could choose from multiple choices so there was a total of seventy-one responses for only thirty-five participants in

the study. While two students stated that they did not have anyone attend the performance, the other students had multiple people who attended. The ballet performance was able to entice numerous friends and family to come to a school community dance performance. When questioned if the participants noticed a sense of excitement in the school community and staff about the upcoming performance, 87.88% answered that their teachers and school administrators expressed their enthusiasm about the upcoming performance (see figure 4.12). This information supports the contention that a performing arts dance program can and does increase school community involvement.

Students were asked if the ballet performance enhanced their holiday season and twenty-one out of thirty-four answered affirmatively, ten were “unsure,” and three said “no” (see figure 4.13). Holidays can be a challenging time for students whose families struggle financially. Having the opportunity for the school community to bring together students and their families to spread cheer through a holiday performance managed to enhance the holiday season for 61.76% of this survey’s participants. When questioned if performing in the ballet changed their outlook about attending school, 90.91% stated “definitely yes” and “probably yes” (see figure 4.14).

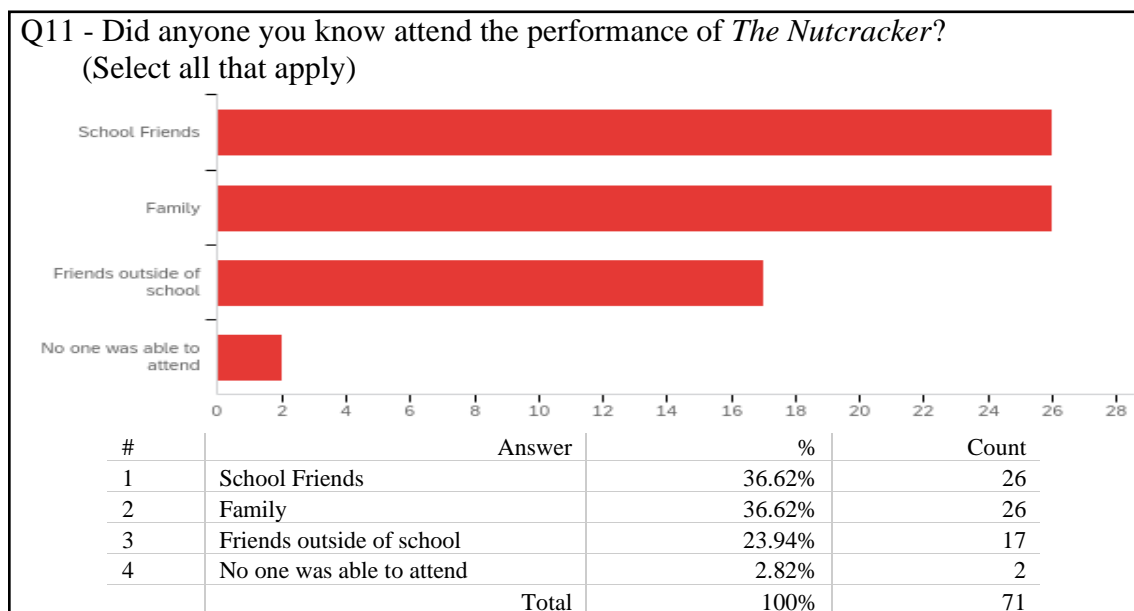


Fig. 4.11. Community/friends attendance at *The Nutcracker*.

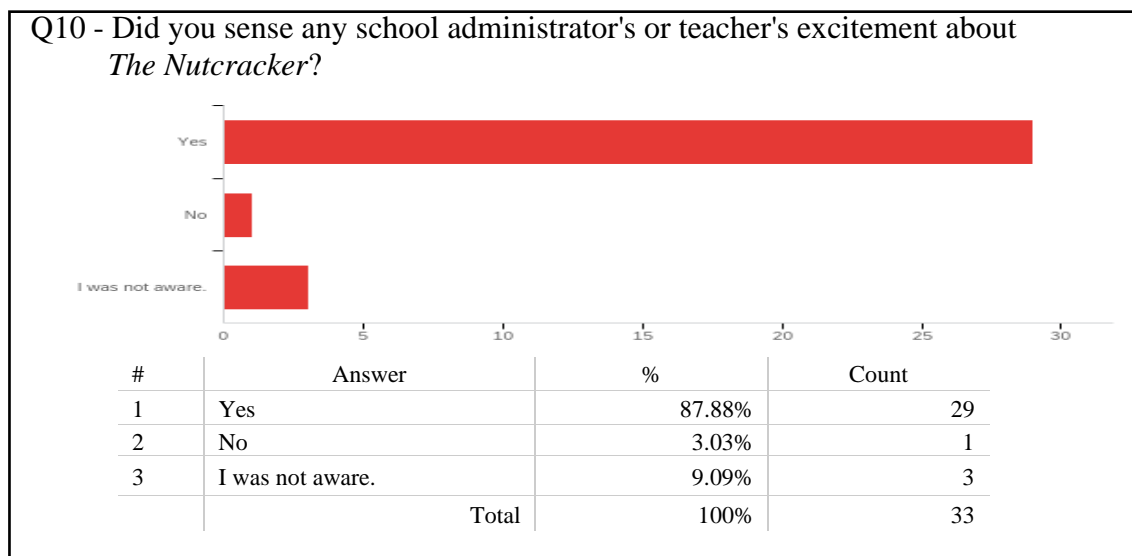


Fig. 4.12. Students' sense of school community involvement in *The Nutcracker*.

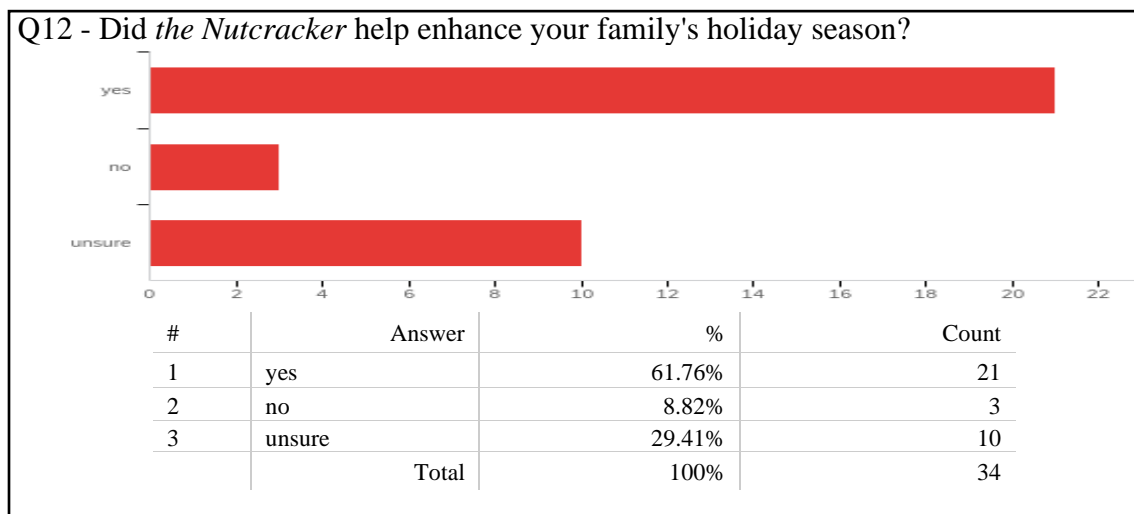


Fig. 4.13. *The Nutcracker's* enhancement of holiday season.

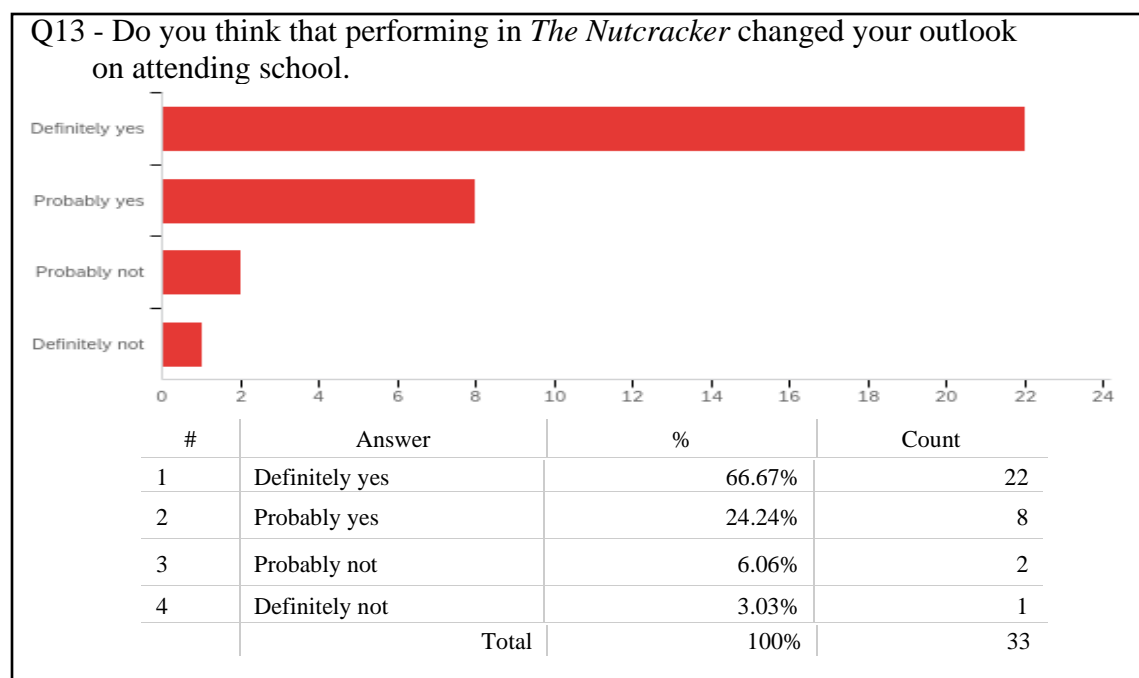


Fig. 4.14. *The Nutcracker* and school attendance.

Personal Growth

The final aspect investigated in this research study was how attending a performing arts dance program and the ballet performance affected the student's personal growth. Much of the

evidence to substantiate personal growth is presented in the qualitative data of this report. The outcome of one multiple-choice question that is indicative of student’s personal growth is that 93.76% of the students responded that they felt performing in the ballet increased their confidence. Only two students out of thirty-two responded that the ballet performance “did not” or “probably did not” increase their confidence. Self-confidence plays an imperative role in future success and allows one to stretch oneself to discover and break boundaries. The high percentage of students expressing that they had increased their confidence is an important factor in creating 21st century learners (see figure 4.15).

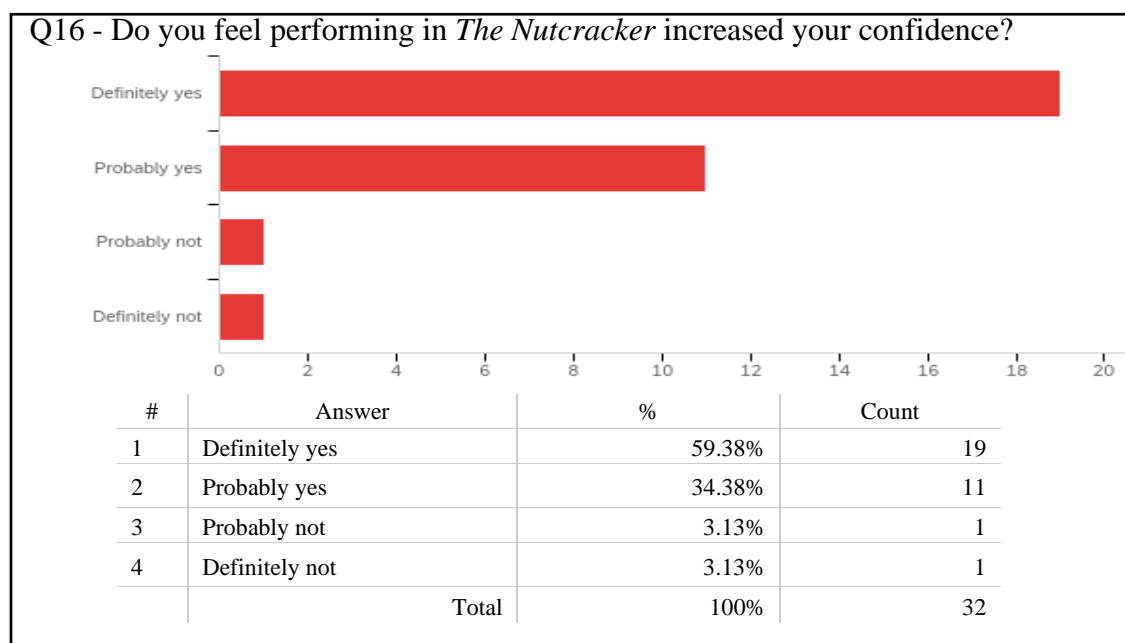


Fig. 4.15. *The Nutcracker* and students’ confidence.

Qualitative Data

The survey contained twelve questions that required participants to provide a written answer and two questions that allowed respondents to provide an additional written response. These two multiple choice questions allowed students to express their thoughts more completely,

and many students took advantage of the opportunity. These written responses were analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative data were first carefully read and analyzed for reoccurring words that expressed the themes of motivation, creativity growth, growth in engagement/involvement, and personal growth which correlate to the research questions. In reviewing the raw data, key words and phrases which are associated with the major themes were identified (see table 4.1). Using these words and phrases, all applicable responses were characterized under each theme. When there were multiple themes in a given response, this researcher chose the most appropriate or prevalent theme that fit the statement. Then the data were organized into tables according to the four identified themes, and the dancer who made the response was noted. Finally, the complete written responses to the survey questions are presented in tables in Appendix D. It was these responses that were analyzed separately and placed into the theme categories using key words listed in table 4.1.

There were three hundred and three total responses of which two hundred and eighty-six (94%) were placed in categories, and seventeen (6%) responses had no defining key words and were not placed in any categories. The breakdown into theme categories included one hundred and six (35%) responses under the theme of motivation (see table D13), fifty-three (17%) responses were placed under creativity (see table D14), eighty-four (28%) responses placed under personal growth (see table D16), and forty-three (14%) responses were placed under engagement (see figure 4.16).

Table 4.1

Themes and Key Words

Themes	Motivation	Creativity Growth	Personal Growth	Engagement, Involvement Growth
Key Words/Phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Desire to participate in Nutcracker, performance opportunity • GPA requirement, Grades, Failing other classes—no Nutcracker • Doing what I like, feel good, happy, joy, fun • Break from the monotonous nature of school • Better way to go to school • Releases stress, anxiety, provide an escape • Success in other classes • Eagerness to learn • Feeling of pride, honor • Hard work, desire to strive, give 100% • Physical movement, exercise, build strength, muscles • Refreshing, feeling free, calm or at peace, relief, letting go • Exciting, feel alive • Seeing others smile • More opportunities, learning something new, new art form • Free (no cost), affordability • Desire, need to dance, learn technique • To become more organized, successful • Feeling of purpose • Motivated by holiday season • To improve time management, coping skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion • Expression, Facial • Creativity • Exploration • New experience • Feelings • Freeing of oneself • Discover one's own style • More open • Different sides of a person • Different moves & choreography • Growing as a dancer • Inspiration • More passionate • Acting • Musicality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover self, grow as a person • Gain confidence in oneself and one's abilities, potential • Work ethic, self-discipline • Changed or can better manage my life, be more responsible • More open minded, more focused or evolved • Try, learn new things, adventure, build talent • Building of skills, multitasking • Physical improvement, health, strength, stamina, flexibility • Improvement of inner being, well-being • Time management • Unique, memorable experience • Mental, emotional release • Empowered, relieved, satisfied, more secure, happier • Feeling of having grown, progressed, expanded, succeeded • Emotional improvement, ambition, accomplishment • Feeling of independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion • Participation • Teamwork • Working in groups • Performing on stage • Loved going to school • Community • Friends • People, everyone, others • Fellow dancers • Mood, atmosphere, backstage vibe • Audience • Proud to be seen • Connection • Christmas spirit, cheer, holiday season • Real world • Outgoing • Social • Professionalism • Teachers

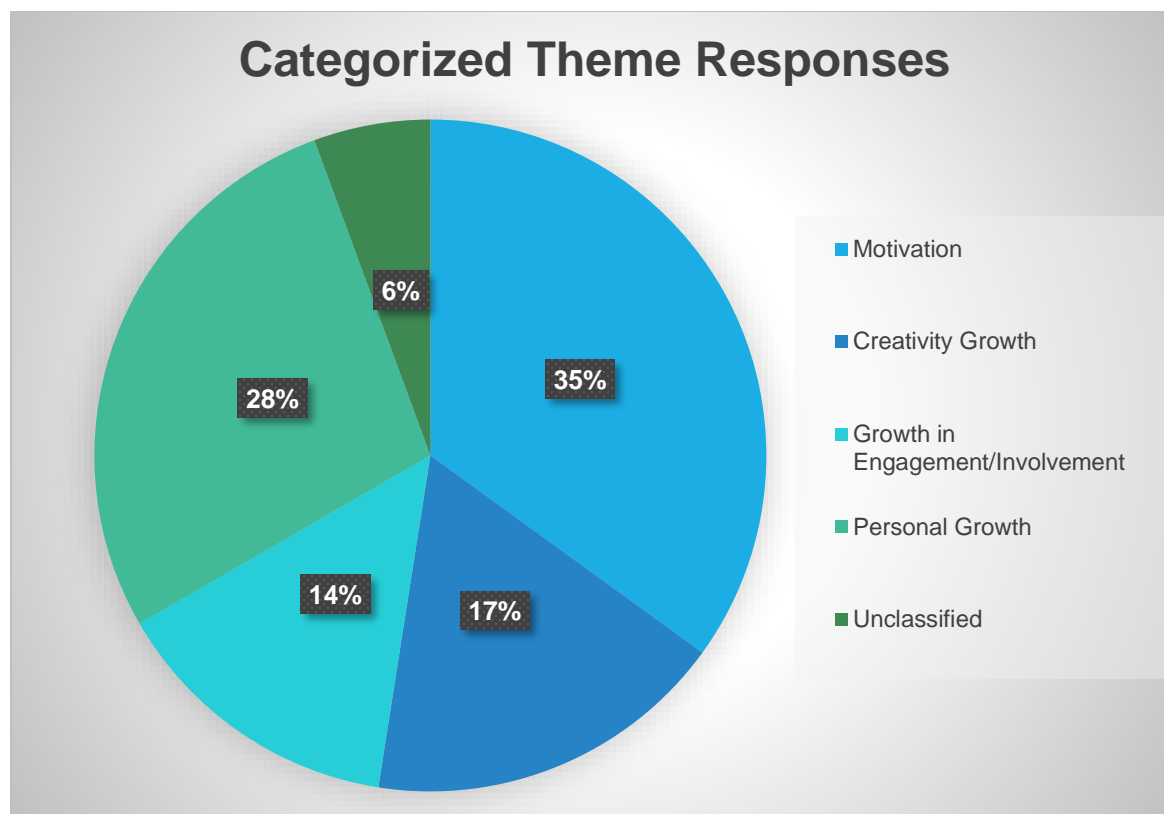


Fig. 4.16. Categorized theme responses.

The responses in Appendix E provide strong support that a performing arts dance program in socioeconomically depressed schools significantly strengthens student motivation, creativity, personal growth, and engagement/involvement in school. These four themes are discussed in greater detail in subsequent paragraphs. In reviewing the data, it is important to note two additional facts that were brought to light in this study. First, is the gratefulness of students who had no financial ability to pay for private dance training, and second, the significance of attending a performing arts dance school had on them. Numerous students asserted the value of having performing arts dance school in a socioeconomically depressed area. For instance, Dancer 20 acknowledged in multiple questions the importance of attending a performing arts dance school by responding,

It has allowed me to experience my dream big! I dreamt of being in an affordable studio since being a little girl and performing in The Nutcracker and it finally happened! The best part was that it was through my school, so I didn't have to pay money to gain ballet experience and perform in my FIRST EVER ballet show! I really get emotional because I feel like I actually had a chance to be part of the ballet community and was not excluded because of my lack of finances or because I don't have the "ideal" body for a ballerina. The production of The Nutcracker allowed me to feel accepted in the dance community as my unique self.

In another question that specifically addressed the importance of a performing arts dance program, Dancer 20 again addressed financial issues expressing, "It's important to me because I finally had a chance to be trained in technique on various dance styles without having to worry about paying a lot for studios." Dancer 28 shared, "My mom found VAPA, and I applied. Once I was there, every day was a dream. I loved going to school. I admired school since I was in primary school but being in a place where I could learn & dance (FOR FREE) was spectacular." Another participant, Dancer 21, acknowledged, "I feel very lucky to be attending a performing dance art school. I experience things most kids don't ever. It had made me the person I am today." Dancer 4 confided, "I think it's so amazing that I am able to receive a free arts education. That's why I originally came to this school because dance classes outside of school get really expensive. I love my school, arts classes, and teachers :)." Finally, Dancer 6 not only proclaimed the joy of attending a performing arts dance program, but noted that a performing arts dance program is not available to most students in the Los Angeles community explaining that:

If I hadn't done the Nutcracker, if I hadn't performed in the Nutcracker, I don't think I would be the person I am today. Having that experience made me who I am. It's a wonderful thing to be able to perform art in school. It gives a chance to others who aren't able to do stuff like that out of school. It also gives students a way to express who they truly are and to find who they want to be and to know where they're going. It's just a way to know exactly what you want to know.

Although each of these dancers are responding to different questions, each expressed their appreciation for the value of being able to attend a performing arts dance program which probably would have been beyond their financial means if not offered at their local public school.

Another interesting fact was the correlation between dance and academic subjects and how the participants felt a performing arts dance program enhanced their education. Students shared that they were able to identify skills they learned in dance that were easily transferable to their academic studies, or how their time in dance class allowed them a mental release so they could better focus on their academic classes. Participants also discussed similarities of both dance and academic classes requiring mental focus, time management, and memorization, while differences included having to sit and listen and not being an active participant. Dancer 28 described the relationship between academic classes and dance:

School and dance are tough, but they're worth it. Striving for an extra pirouette, is worth all the aches and pains to gain that turn. A few extra points on an exam are worth the late nights & extra studying for that "C" to turn into a "B." Discipline and motivation are significant in all aspects of education & physical demanding lifestyles. What motivates me to get up in the morning? The ability to move. To be able to walk & stretch in the

morning. Discipline is not staying in bed all day but taking advantage of moveable joints & muscles. Motivating yourself to read an extra five pages of your textbook for school, so that it saves you ten minutes the following day.

Additionally, Dancer 35 disclosed that “VAPA gave us many challenges that revolve around memorization, such as choreography or skills test. This could easily be compared to memorizing English definitions or math formulas.” Dancer 33 simply explained, “Characteristics of dance that make it similar to other classes I take at school is that if you want to improve on your skills, you have to practice and study the movement/material in order to be successful.” Finally, Dancer 20 attested, that “Discipline, passion, determination, and PRACTICE. These characteristics are essential to both school and dance in order to succeed, grow/get better in the skill, and be responsible.” This value of a performing arts dance program is an important aspect to recognize, and it is clearly illuminated by the numerous participant’s responses to the question.

Motivation

A major factor in achieving success is motivation. Anything that increases motivation is a value to education. In reviewing the data, one of the words used most often in a response was ‘motivation.’ The causes of the motivation varied, but frequency of the word was highly prevalent. For example, when dancers were asked if and how participating in a performing arts dance program helped them become more successful in other subjects in school, Dancer 31 revealed:

The Nutcracker was a ballet performance I desperately wanted to be a part of. To avoid being pulled out, I knew that I had to maintain a high GPA and do well in all my classes. This standard or requirement made me more determined and enthusiastic about working

hard in all my classes. Furthermore, the tricks, technique, and constant practice help me build skills that I used and continue to use in my academics. Developing time management skills, persevering through challenges, working in teams, multitasking, taking action, and allowing myself to fail and learning from that are just a few of the gifts I gained while being part of The Nutcracker. Aside from the skills I gained, The Nutcracker supported and helped me and many of my classmates get through school. The Nutcracker was a way out of stress and a moment to forget about tests, finals, homework, and other schoolwork. It allowed us to clear our minds and take a moment to center ourselves. It was a relief and coping mechanism that helped us get through it all.

Another student, Dancer 35, simply acknowledged, “Overall a passion to perform, greatly increased my time management skills, which I’m still thankful for today.” The vast majority of the students in this survey shared that they were motivated by being able to perform in the ballet. Table 4.29 presents the participants’ responses, regardless of the question, which reflect the theme of motivation according to the identifiable key words used in their answer.

Creative Growth

The goal of a performing arts dance education is to involve students in the artistic process by developing the student’s technique, creative process, and performance. Fostering this creative growth through shared artistic experiences provides the essential foundation for innovativeness, an important quality for 21st century education. It is the premise of this research study that creative growth is enhanced when students have access to a performing arts dance program. Participants’ responses provided an overwhelming variety of how they grew creatively. They disclosed various creative benefits that included being inspired, more passionate, more open, and recognizing a different side of oneself. Participants experienced creative growth in their own

personal way. For instance, Dancer 35 reflected, “they’d probably describe me as different. When I first started dancing, I wasn’t confident, and slightly lazy. I now look at dance in a completely different light. I’m inspired, always training, teaching, etc. Part of this transformation was me finding a love for a style I had no idea existed. Although that change was pretty drastic.” An additional example includes Dancer 22, who claimed, “Before I felt really stuck emotionally but as I started doing dance, I felt myself releasing all of those emotions.” This same dancer also imparted, “before dance I took six years of violin lessons, they’re both similar in a way but also very different. In dance you get more freedom to express yourself in however way you’d like however in music there really isn’t any “freedom” because if you try to have your “freedom” you would completely mess up the whole piece.” Another interesting remark was disclosed by Dancer 31, who explained:

When I am in a dance class, I am filled with appreciation, joy, passion, and strength that no other sport, activity, practice can’t make me feel. It is an art so precious and powerful that allows me to free myself. Everything seems to fall into place when I’m dancing. The feeling is so unique, almost impossible to explain. All I can really say is that nothing has ever made me feel the way I do when I dance.

One more pertinent comment was shared by Dancer 6, who explained, “Dance has always been effective in my life. Dance class has opened my mind to many possibilities and has made want to learn more. Dancing is about tell a story of some kind. Stories we may learn in different class. Dance exercises my mind and fills it with energy and motivation.” The complete list of students’ creative growth responses is listed in Appendix E.

Engagement/Involvement Growth

Another important aspect that this research study investigated was whether a performing arts dance program increases engagement and involvement in school. It has been well documented by authors and researchers mentioned in this study that students and parents who are enthusiastic about school and education reinforce and extend classroom learning. This research sought to look at how a performing arts dance program, and specifically, *The Nutcracker*, contributed to this outlook. This research revealed numerous ways student enthusiasm and parent involvement increased through statements that included: love of going to school, feeling a sense of community, Christmas spirit, teamwork, inclusion, dance community, backstage vibe, teachers, professionalism, performing on stage, and being proud to be seen.

A specific example, given by Dancer 30, revealed, “I felt it was important to me to attend a performing arts high school because it would take me out of my comfort zone considering I was a shy person growing up. It made me more social in a sense and I finally felt like I could just talk to people without being nervous.” Another pertinent point of being a part of a dance community was affirmed by Dancer 33, when they shared, “When I performed *The Nutcracker*, I felt so happy and felt like I was in a whole other world when I was performing on stage. I felt free and felt very elegant when I was performing on stage. Performing *The Nutcracker* also helped me feel a sense of inclusion among everyone.” Another positive assertion was made by Dancer 18 who disclosed, “*The Nutcracker* and dance have taught me that teamwork is a very important and valuable skill to have.” A final example is Dancer 12, who simply stated, “*The Nutcracker* was really enjoyable because it made me feel more connected to my peers and it was the highlight of the year,” and “It provided a sense of community and belonging.” These comments are just a few examples of the positive value of a performing arts dance program. A

complete list of responses that were grouped as engagement/involvement responses are listed in Appendix E.

Personal Growth

The final aspect this research sought to investigate was whether a performing arts dance program positively contributes to the personal growth of the student. This researcher views personal growth as the understanding of oneself and pushing oneself to their highest potential, which is significant in the student's success and happiness in life. The responses in the survey strongly supported the personal growth of the participants. Some of the comments include gaining confidence in oneself and one's ability, developing a belief in one's potential, and growing as a person. Participants also mentioned time management, multitasking, work ethic, gaining teamwork skills, improvement of inner being/well-being, and emotional improvement. One example of how the ballet personally affected Dancer 35 can be seen in the response, "I felt uncomfortable, I felt nervous, I felt unprepared. Although I was an insecure sophomore, The Nutcracker performance was a pivotal step in my love for dance. I had to experience dance at its scariest to understand how much I had to grow." Dancer 35 continued in another statement acknowledging, "I give my school credit for helping me find my love for dance. I fell in love with dance in my junior year and it changed my life. If any other kid has the chance to experience this change, I'd say it's absolutely necessary!" Another positive assertion came from Dancer 12, who shared, "I can use self-discipline and perseverance to give my best and work to my full potential in future jobs or opportunities." Dancer 33 summed up the feelings of personal growth achieved in a performing arts dance program in the statements:

I feel it's very important to attend a performing arts dance school because it gives many kids opportunities that they would not have gotten anywhere else. It also

gives kids the chance to learn new things that they would not have had learned if they attended a regular school. Attending performing arts schools opens and offers so many life-changing opportunities that kids would not have gotten or heard of if they attended a regular school with no performing arts (and) The skills (learned in dance/in performance) have helped me because they made me realize that whatever I put my mind to, I can do. They made me realize that I am a lot stronger than I think I am. These skills also taught me to be more understanding with myself and with others, but to most of all be patient with myself. These skills also helped me to push myself, even during the times that I feel like I can't keep pushing. Lastly, they have helped and inspired me to keep working hard for whatever I want to achieve in my life.

Dancers 6, 21, and 33, each used the words “person I am today” or “made me who I am” in describing the value of attending a performing arts dance program. This is strong evidence that validates the research questions, strongly supporting performing arts dance curriculum for all students. The complete responses for each dancer whose response was classified as personal growth can be found in Appendix E.

Reflections on Data

In addition to the preceding analysis, this researcher also took note of another co-relationship. As freshmen entering high school, 91.43% stated that they chose to be part of the Dance Academy, however, three participants (Dancers 2, 16, and 21) stated that they did not choose, but instead ended up, being placed in the Dance Academy. The data also show that all but four students (Dancers 16, 17, 22, and 35) had prior dance experience. Dancer 16 was the only student that had had no dance experience and did not initially choose to be part of the dance

company. The researcher believes it is important to also investigate this specific set of participants' responses when establishing the value of a performing arts dance program as part of the school core curriculum. It is interesting to note how the dance academy program over time affected this particular group of participants' attitudes since the dance academy was not their original choice. Dancer 16, who is now an alumnus, stated that while dance is not a passion, it "has helped me to do better emotionally and physically," and before performing in the ballet, they felt "insecure about myself but now feel secure about myself and my body."

Dancer 2 shared that there was previous dance experience prior to high school but found that acting was their new passion. Additional comments that Dancer 2 shared details about how a performing arts dance academy affected them saying "Before: carefree. After: more passionate," "more outspoken," "more developed," "more outgoing and comfortable," and "more confident."

Dancer 21 replied that although the dance academy was not their initial choice, the dance academy had a positive impact. In response to various questions, Dancer 21 revealed these positive responses: "had to do well to perform in *The Nutcracker*," "make me more involved and had to do better in all my classes," "discipline and memorization helps in normal classes," "learned how to work in big group's, thinking under pressure and getting out of my comfort zone," and "getting used to being uncomfortable because in the real world that is the only way you learn." Their responses show that they felt that emotional expressiveness, richness or colorfulness of imagery, visualization of movement or action, and extending or breaking emotional boundaries were increased. Finally, Dancer 21 shared, "I feel better about myself and it's so fun! I feel confidence, happiness, and excitement" and responded "yes" that the ballet "definitely changed outlook on school."

With no previous dance experience, Dancer 17, responded affirmatively when asked if they had school friends, family, or friends outside of school attend the ballet, and if it enhanced the family holiday season. This Dancer also replied, “probably yes,” when asked if performing in the ballet increased their confidence, and “definitely yes,” when asked if it changed their outlook on attending school. Other written responses to questions included, “Dance helped in other subjects by increasing confidence and willingness to try more,” “Skills learned in dance will help in the future to be more confident and expressive,” and “Used what I have learned in dance to do better in school.” When Dancer 17 was asked which words would describe them before having taken dance class, they answered that they were, “shy and insecure,” then after having taken dance class feeling “more secure.” Finally, Dancer 17 disclosed that attending a performing arts dance school was “very important because it shows what effort can achieve when one is allowed to perform.”

Even with no previous dance experience prior to entering the dance academy, Dancer 22 shared, “I felt happy because it was such a huge distraction from the stress of a classroom although sometimes, I felt really tired and felt really overwhelmed due to past classes but that all changes as soon as I entered dance territory.” This dancer also shared, “It really helped me become confident and see another side of myself.” About the ballet, Dancer 21 revealed, “Leading up towards The Nutcracker everyone wouldn't stop talking about The Nutcracker which helped me continue doing good in my classes” and “something else that I liked was after the show...all of the friends and families taking pictures with their kids and the overall feeling of joy.”

It is important to point out that although Dancer 35 had no previous dance experience, their overall feelings toward the experience were demonstrated by, “VAPA was great because

the teacher was great. When I went it was full of passionate teachers who had their student's growth in mind each class. I can't thank them enough for helping me fall in love with dance."

The importance of mentioning these dancers in this section was to spotlight the fact that these students had no idea how dance could affect their lives, and yet every one of them credited the performing arts dance academy with positively impacting their education and life.

Summary of Findings

The research questions asked if public schools in socioeconomic depressed areas with a performing arts dance program advances student creativity, motivation, and involvement in school. Analysis of the data strongly validates the important value of performing arts dance programs in public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas according to the participant's perspective. The data confirmed that the dancers in this research study expressed growth from attending a performing arts dance program both academically, physically, and mentally.

A threat to data quality is a "bot" completing a survey or a person taking the survey multiple times. Qualtrics uses Q_RecaptchaScore to screen data for fraud detection. The Q_RecaptchaScore for this research thesis was a minimum of 0.70 and maximum of 1.00 with a mean of 0.91. Qualtrics website states, "A score of greater than or equal to 0.5 means the respondent is likely a human and a score of less than 0.5 means the respondent is likely a bot" (1). Since the mean score of this research was 0.91, it was strongly indicative that the survey was completed by each individual participant.

This study identified a positive bond between participating in a performance and motivation for academic achievement. For dancers, the power of performance is apparent. The desire to perform was an encouragement to keep their grade point average high. The statements made by the students in this study provide evidence that these students grew not only

academically, but creatively and emotionally as well. The students in the dance academy shared that something happened in dance class that is not happening elsewhere in school. Even the students that took dance only for enjoyment, shared that dance class gave them a chance to unwind, recharge, and explore. A significant fact that the data reveals is that even though a student may not choose to enroll in the dance program, the student ultimately acknowledged that they grew as an individual because of the program.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to give voice to the students who live in a socioeconomically disadvantage area and attend or have attended a school that combines strong academics with a performing arts dance academy. It is the belief of this researcher that providing dance within a framework of the California Dance Standards that students are afforded the opportunity to truly experience the art of dance. This specific demographic of students not only received the chance to learn good technique from a highly qualified educator, but they were also provided choreographic and performance opportunities allowing them to communicate a story, express feelings, or emotions through movement to discover their imaginative abilities. The goal of this study was to examine how this type of dance education impacts students as well as school communities in these socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Many studies have been done that support how performing arts enhances learning. As previously noted, Bradley et al. delineated in *Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting*, that “In schools where dance programs flourish, students’ attendance rises, teachers are more satisfied, and the overall sense of community grows” (56). Consistent findings were observed from the experiences and perceptions of the performing arts students in this research study. The data presented in this chapter reflect the student’s heartfelt responses and positive outcomes which provide a strong argument for the importance of a performing arts dance program as an essential part of the academic core curriculum.

Implications for Teaching

As a public high school dance teacher with a bachelor's degree in dance and a master's degree in education, this researcher has seen first-hand the difference a performing arts dance program can make in the lives of students, particularly for those students that do not typically have access to such opportunities. With fourteen years of teaching dance in California's socioeconomically depressed schools, first as a physical education/dance teacher and then with students in a dance classroom, this researcher has been a strong advocate for performing arts dance programs to be available to all students. Without adequate research or data, it has been difficult to convince principals and administration, especially in these budget cutting times, of the necessity of a performing arts dance program and the benefits to a student's growth intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Bringing a strong performing arts dance program that includes foundational technique, basic dance forms, and theater opportunities to low-income public schools that would normally not have the necessary funds, resources, and opportunities, is equally as important—if not more so—than providing these same opportunities to middle- and higher-income area schools. Parents in economically depressed areas do not have discretionary funds to spend on sending their child to a private dance school, nor do they have the means to support fundraisers by the school to raise funds for such a program. Dance is an art form that all students deserve equal opportunities to learn regardless of financial means.

Dance arts education can enrich students in various ways, including socially, physically, mentally, emotionally, creatively, and spiritually. Dance helps students learn to be unique and creative, which may not be developed in the core subjects of reading and mathematics. The

importance of motivation, creativity, personal growth, and engagement in the educational curriculum cannot be overstated.

The purpose of this research was to look at how a performance, such as *The Nutcracker*, can promote and unlock creativity, motivation, personal growth and school engagement for students. Unlike most academic subjects where a question has a specific answer, dance offers an infinite possibility of answers. It is this type of philosophy that will enhance the innovative thinking that is needed for the 21st century. It is important to examine where the educational curriculum is stifling creativity and determine whether teachers are aware of the importance of creativity as a critical life skill. Consequently, developing educational standards that promote creativity is even more vital to today's generation of children. Establishing creativity as part of the curriculum is important, and dance arts is an essential element.

Currently, California categorizes dance under the physical education department, which makes the focus of dance strictly on physical activity and virtually eliminates the ability to develop creativity. Dance is more than just a physical activity; it is an expression of passion fueled by inspiration and delivered through physical actions and imagination. To truly experience the art of dance, students must be given the opportunity to learn good technique and be given the opportunity to put that technical ability to use to tell a story or to express feeling or emotions through movement in order to discover their imaginative abilities. Providing such a dance program challenges, engages, and better prepares students to advance in the future.

Research to support dance is imperative in that it focuses on students' feedback about the meaning and value of how combining a strong academic and performing art dance program affected them and their education. When structuring an academic program to promote elevated levels of student achievement it is not only important to consider educators' views, theory, and

knowledge but to also listen to the students who are affected by these decisions. Student input is a vital component to determine the success of an academic program. Participant responses provided a greater understanding of the value of dance arts opportunities to socioeconomically depressed public schools. This research provides convincing evidence of the value of performing arts dance programs. With the massive cuts to arts education and most specially to dance departments, it is hoped that the research results in this survey will provide productive insight to the education field.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, this was a small study limited by the students who performed in the researcher's production of *The Nutcracker* and that the outreach to contact these students only resulted in thirty-five participants. The second factor is that only students from one of the two schools participated, limiting whether the results are transferable. Another aspect that must be considered is the effect of student-teacher relationship. The relationship between teacher and student could have affected the student's engagement in school, their effort in class, and their feelings of personal growth, so subsequent surveys could have divergent outcomes depending on the teacher-student relationship. A further aspect that may have caused bias is that this researcher was the producer/artistic director of the ballet. An additional limitation of the research project is the limited time of data collection. The survey was only available for five months. A longer, more in depth study might provide even more significant information to validate the value of a performing arts education in socioeconomically depressed schools.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the strong indications of benefits in student motivations, creativity, personal growth and engagement/involvement in school, more research is needed on this topic. It is important to consider all views when evaluating the effectiveness of an academic program that best advances the highest levels of student achievement. Therefore, more research involving multiple perspectives, including students' viewpoints, of the advantages of a performing arts dance program with performance opportunities is a crucial element of a student's educational curriculum.

Final Thoughts

Dance is an art form that belongs to all people, is as equally aesthetic as all the other art forms, and should be made fully accessible to all people. Dance is inclusive and can combine diverse forms of expression including styles like classic, contemporary, modern, folk, jazz, reggae, and hip hop. The important aspect of inclusion of dance education is that dance must be taught as an art and not simply a movement or physical education class. As an illustration of the value of this fact, Sandra Ruppert provides us with "the arts help create the kind of learning environment conducive to teacher and student success by fostering teacher innovation, a positive professional culture, community engagement, increased student attendance, effective instructional practice, and school identity" (14). The results of this research study supported this premise.

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APPENDIX A
SCHOOL AND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVALS

XXXXXX

Date: October 12, 2020

To: University Northern Colorado

Re: Angelina Burleigh Master Thesis

I give Angelina Burleigh, one of our dance instructors, permission to conduct her thesis surveys at XXXXXX. I have reviewed her thesis topic, the survey consents, and recruitment letter and allowing her to conduct her survey from voluntary participants of our students and alumni.

Sincerely,

XXXXXX

Principal, xxxxxx



Date: 11/23/2020

Principal Investigator: Angelina Burleigh

Committee Action: **IRB EXEMPT DETERMINATION – New Protocol**

Action Date: 11/23/2020

Protocol Number: [2010012262](#)

Protocol Title: Community Perspective: How participating in The Nutcracker enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Expiration Date:

The University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol and determined your project to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d)(701) for research involving

Category 1 (2018): RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

You may begin conducting your research as outlined in your protocol. Your study does not require further review from the IRB, unless changes need to be made to your approved protocol.

As the Principal Investigator (PI), you are still responsible for contacting the UNC IRB office if and when:

- You wish to deviate from the described protocol and would like to formally submit a modification request. Prior IRB approval must be obtained before any changes can be implemented (except to eliminate an immediate hazard to research participants).
- You make changes to the research personnel working on this study (add or drop research staff on this protocol).



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

- At the end of the study or before you leave The University of Northern Colorado and are no longer a student or employee, to request your protocol be closed. *You cannot continue to reference UNC on any documents (including the informed consent form) or conduct the study under the auspices of UNC if you are no longer a student/employee of this university.
- You have received or have been made aware of any complaints, problems, or adverse events that are related or possibly related to participation in the research.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Compliance Manager, Nicole Morse, at 970-351-1910 or via e-mail at nicole.morse@unco.edu. Additional information concerning the requirements for the protection of human subjects may be found at the Office of Human Research Protection website - <http://hhs.gov/ohrp/> and <https://www.unco.edu/research/research-integrity-and-compliance/institutional-review-board/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Morse".

Nicole Morse
Research Compliance Manager

University of Northern Colorado: FWA00000784

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORMS



PARENT OR GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM
FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Researcher: Angelina Burleigh, MA in Education, CSUN & candidate for MA in Dance at UNC
Research Advisor: Christy O'Connell-Black, Instructor of Dance, & Co-Coordinator of MA in Dance ED. Phone Number: (970) 351-4133 Email: Christy.OConnellBlack@unco.edu

**Welcome to The Research Study Where Your Child Can Share
Their Thoughts About Their Educational Opportunities!**

As a Dance Education M.A. candidate at The University of Northern Colorado, I am interested in understanding the students' feelings about performing dance arts opportunities as part of their educational academic curriculum in public school. My research will be a retrospective study designed to question dancers who previously performed in *The Nutcracker* from 2009 to 2018 at either xxxx or xxxx. The intent of this research is to promote knowledge that public schools in socioeconomically depressed areas that offer performing dance opportunities enhance a student's ability to develop creativity, increase motivation to attend school, improve academic and personal growth as well as strengthen school communities. My thesis statement is, "Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools."

I have seen firsthand the value of a dance program as part of an academic public-school setting. Without adequate research or data, however, it is difficult to promote the value of a performing arts dance program to enhance student education, especially in these budget-cutting times.

Should you choose to let your child participate, your child will be asked to complete a survey about their dance experience, their initial feelings about being in a dance class, their desire to attend school prior to taking a dance class with performance opportunities, their reflections about their experiences in performing *The Nutcracker*, and how and why the inclusion of a performing arts dance program has made a difference in their life.

The survey will consist of answering multi-choice questions and a couple short answer questions. Your child will complete the survey online at their own convenience outside of school. The survey should take your child around 15-20 minutes to complete. Since I know each of the children personally from producing and directing *The Nutcracker* as well as being their dance teacher, I want to assure you that your child's responses and their privacy will be strictly guarded by me. I am the only person handling the survey and compiling the data. Any research report, including the

Page 1 of 2 _____
(Parent's or guardian's initials here)



written thesis that this study is based on, will not have any information that will make it possible to identify them. Respondents will only be referred to in text as "Dancer 1," etc. The data will be stored on an external flash drive and secured in my home safe.

Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. You or your child have the right to withdraw at any point during the study. Your child will receive no incentive for their participation. If your child is currently in any of my dance classes, their participation on this survey will have no effect on their class grade. Since this study only asks your child to reflect on their own personal experiences with *The Nutcracker* performance and attending a performing dance arts school, there is little to no risk in completing the survey. The Principal Investigator of this study can be contacted at xxxxxx.

This consent form will be secured in my home safe. It will remain in the safe until I travel to the University of Northern Colorado in the Summer of 2021. At that time, I will bring the completed consent form to Crabbe Hall. The consent form will be stored in the office of Christy O'Connell-Black, Dance Education MA co-coordinator, room 308 in Crabbe Hall. All data and consent forms will be destroyed after three years.

By signing below, you acknowledge.

- Your child's participation in the study is voluntary.
- You give your permission for your under 18 years old child to participate in this study

Your child's participation is voluntary. You may decide not to let your child participate in this study and if you begin participation, you may still decide to stop and withdraw your child at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like your child to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be sent home with your child for you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Child's Full Name (please print)

Child's Birth Date (month/day/year)

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO (For Participant between 15 and under 18-years-of age)

Project Title: Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Researcher: Angelina Burleigh, MA in Education, CSUN & candidate for MA in Dance at UNC
 Research Advisor: Christy O'Connell-Black, Instructor of Dance, & Co-Coordinator of MA in Dance ED---- Phone Number: (970) 351-4133---- Email: Christy.OConnellBlack@unco.edu

Welcome to A Research Study Where You Can Share Your Thoughts About Your Educational Opportunities!

As a master's student in dance at The University of Northern Colorado, I am interested in understanding your feelings about being able to attend a public high school that offers performing dance arts classes as part of your educational academic curriculum. My research will gather information about how you feel about having the ability to take dance classes and perform in shows and if participating in performing dance arts classes helped you develop your creative, talent, gave you more motivation to attend school, and helped you develop your inner self.

The study will involve students who have previously performed "*The Nutcracker*" from 2009 to 2018 at either xxxx or xxxx. The purpose of this research is to show that public schools that offer performing arts to students who are often marginalized will enhance that student's motivation, creativity, and academic and personal growth as well as strengthen school communities. My thesis statement is, "Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools."

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your experiences in a school that has offered you the opportunities to dance and perform and how this experience has made a difference in your education and in you. The survey will ask about prior dance experience, your initial feelings about being in a high school dance class, your desire to attend school prior to enrolling in a performing art high school, your reflections about your experiences in performing *The Nutcracker*, and how and why the inclusion of a performing arts dance program has been a benefit to you. The survey will consist of answering multi-choice questions and a couple short answer questions. You will complete the survey online at your convenience outside of school. Since I know each of you personally from producing and directing *The Nutcracker* as well as

Page 1 of 2 _____
(Participant's initials here)



being your dance teacher, I want to assure you that your responses and your privacy will be strictly guarded by me. I am the only person handling the survey and complying the data. Any research report, including the written thesis that this study is based on, will not have any information that will make it possible to identify you. Respondents will only be referred to in text as "Dancer 1," etc. The data will be stored on an external flash drive and secured in my home safe.

The study should take you around 15-20 minutes to complete. You will not receive any payment for your participation. If you are currently in any of my dance classes, your participation on this survey will have no effect on your class grade. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to not participate at any point during the study. Since this study only asks you to talk about your own personal experiences with *The Nutcracker* performance and attending a performing arts dance school, there is little to no risk in answering the survey. As the Principal Investigator of this study, you can contact me at xxxx with any questions or concerns.

The consent forms will be held in my home safe. They will remain in the safe until I travel to the University of Northern Colorado in the Summer of 2021. At that time, I will bring the completed consent forms to Crabbe Hall. The consent forms will be stored in the office of Christy O'Connell-Black, Dance Education MA co-coordinator, room 308 in Crabbe Hall. All forms will be destroyed after three years.

By signing below, you recognize:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are under 18 years old, and your parents read and signed a consent.
- You may choose to end your participation at any time for any reason.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation, you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
(For Participant over 18-years-old)

Project Title: Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Researcher: Angelina Burleigh, MA in Education, CSUN & candidate for MA in Dance at UNC
 Research Advisor: Christy O'Connell-Black, Instructor of Dance, & Co-Coordinator of MA in Dance ED. Phone Number: (970) 351-4133 Email: Christy.OConnellBlack@unco.edu

**Welcome to The Research Study Where You Can Share
 Your Thoughts About Your Educational Opportunities!**

As a Dance Education M.A. candidate at The University of Northern Colorado, I am interested in understanding your feelings about attending a public high school that offers performing arts dance classes as part of your educational academic curriculum. My research will gather information to examine the value of performing arts dance opportunities in a socioeconomically depressed public school and whether it enhances a student's ability to develop creativity, increases motivation to attend school, improves academic and personal growth as well as strengthening school communities. The study will involve students who have previously performed a *The Nutcracker* from 2009 to 2018 at either xxxx or xxxx. The intent of the research is to learn if attending a public high school that offers performing arts dance classes as part of your academic curriculum has made a difference in your life and if it benefitted you. My thesis statement is, "Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools."

I have seen firsthand the value of a dance program as part of an academic public-school setting. Without adequate research or data, however, it is difficult to promote the value of a performing arts dance program to enhance student education, especially in these budget-cutting times.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your experience in a school that has offered you opportunities to perform and how that has made a difference in your education. The survey will ask about prior dance experience, your feelings about being in a dance class, your desire to attend school prior being part of a performing arts class, your reflections about your experiences in performing *The Nutcracker*, and how and why the inclusion of a performing arts dance program has improved the quality of your education.

The survey will consist of answering multi-choice questions and a couple short answer questions. You will complete the survey online at your own convenience outside of school. The survey should take you around 15-20 minutes to complete.

Page 1 of 2 _____
 (Subject's initials here)



Since I know each of you personally from producing and directing *The Nutcracker* as well as being your dance teacher, I want to assure you that your responses and your privacy will be strictly guarded by me. I am the only person handling the survey and compiling the data. Any research report, including the written thesis that this study is based on, will not have any information that will make it possible to identify you. Respondents will only be referred to in text as "Dancer 1," etc. The data will be stored on an external flash drive and secured in my home safe.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study. You will receive no incentive for your participation. If you are currently in any of my dance classes, your participation on this survey will have no effect on your current class grade. Since this study only asks you to reflect on your own personal experiences with *The Nutcracker* performance and attending a performing arts school, there is little to no risk in answering the survey. The Principal Investigator of this study can be contacted at xxxx.

This consent form will be secured in my home safe. It will remain in the safe until I travel to the University of Northern Colorado in the Summer of 2021. At that time, I will bring the completed consent form to Crabbe Hall. The consent form will be stored in the office of Christy O'Connell-Black, Dance Education MA co-coordinator, room 308 in Crabbe Hall. All data and consent forms will be destroyed after three years.

By signing below, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You may choose to terminate your participation at any time for any reason.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study, and if you begin participation, you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C
RESEARCH SURVEY

RESEARCH STUDY

Welcome to The Research Study Where You Can Share Your Thoughts About Your Educational Opportunities!

Project Title: Community Perspective: How participating in *The Nutcracker* enhances student motivation and growth in socioeconomically depressed public schools.

Researcher: Angelina Burleigh, MA in Education, CSUN & candidate for MA in Dance at UNC

Survey

Please respond to the following questions to the best of your ability. If you feel the need to clarify, please feel free to contact me at xxxxxxThank you!

Q1

What high school did you attend or are you attending?

- xxxxxxxx
- xxxxxxxx

Q2

If you attended xxxxxxxx, did you initially want to be in the Dance Academy?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable—(you are a student who attended xxxxxxxx)

Q3

If you attended xxxxxxxx, did you initially want to be in dance class?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable—(you are a student who attended xxxxxxxx)

Q4

Are you a current high school student or an alumnus?

- Current
- Alumnus

Q5

Did you have any experience in dance before attending a dance class in public high school?

- None
- under 1-year, occasional classes, no performance opportunities
- 2-4 years, no performance opportunities
- 5 or more years, no performance opportunities
- under 1 year, with performance opportunities
- 2-4 years, with performance opportunities
- 5 or more years, with performance opportunities

Q6

If you had dance experience before attending high school, where was/were the class(es) offered?

- public school setting
- a private individual
- private dance school
- Not Applicable (no dance experience)

Q7

What style of dance did you learn previous to attending high school? Check all that apply.

- Tap
- Jazz
- Hip Hop
- Ballet
- Cultural
- Other (please list)
- No previous style learned

Q8

Select the year or years you participated in *The Nutcracker*?

- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

Q9

Prior to this *Nutcracker* experience have you ever heard of or seen a *Nutcracker* performance, either live or recorded?

- Never seen, never heard of *The Nutcracker*
- Never seen, but heard of *The Nutcracker*
- Heard of *The Nutcracker*, but never seen it
- Seen *The Nutcracker*

Q10

Did you sense any school administrator's or teacher's excitement about *The Nutcracker*?

- Yes
- No
- I was not aware.

Q11

Did anyone you know attend the performance of *The Nutcracker*? (Select all that apply)

- School Friends
- Family
- Friends outside of school
- No one was able to attend

Q12

Did *The Nutcracker* help enhance your family's holiday season?

- yes
- no
- unsure

Q13

Do you think that performing in *The Nutcracker* changed your outlook on attending school?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Q14

After performing in *The Nutcracker* did you desire to perform again?

- Yes
- No

Q15

Did a GPA requirement to perform in *The Nutcracker* make you strive to do better in school?

- Yes
- No

Q16

Do you feel performing in *The Nutcracker* increased your confidence?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Q17

Do you think dance class/performing in *The Nutcracker* helped you to become more successful in other subjects in school? Why or/how? (Please use text box below to answer)

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not
- Please state Why or How in text box below

A rectangular text input box with a light gray background. On the right side, there is a vertical scroll bar with up and down arrow buttons. On the bottom left and bottom right corners, there are small arrow buttons for horizontal scrolling.

Q18

In which ways do you feel that performing in *The Nutcracker* have helped you? (Select all that apply)

- emotional expressiveness
- richness/colorfulness of imagery
- visualization of movement or action
- extending or breaking emotional boundaries
- Not Applicable (did not notice any difference)
- Other (Please describe below)

Q19

What characteristics of dance that make it similar or different from other classes?

Q20

Can you identify skills that you specifically learn in Dance Class or in performing *The Nutcracker* that will help you in your in your future?

Q21

How do you see yourself using the skills you listed above in your future or if you are an alumnus how have the skills you listed above helped you?

Q22

How do you feel when you are in dance class?

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

Q23

Do you feel different when you dance different styles of dance?

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

Q24

How did you feel when you performed *The Nutcracker*?

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

Q25

Please list any other addition comments you would like to share about your experience in a performing arts dance school or performing in *The Nutcracker*.

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

Q26

What words describes you?

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

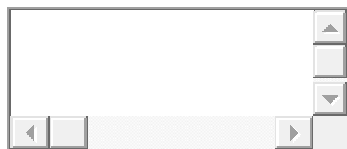
Q27

How would others (parents, teachers, friends) describe you?

An empty text input field with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three vertically stacked arrow buttons (up, down, and a middle button). At the bottom, there are two horizontal arrow buttons (left and right) and a small square button.

Q28

How important do you feel attending a performing arts dance school is/was to you and why?

A rectangular text input field with a thin border. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with upward and downward arrows, serving as a scroll bar. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, one with a left-pointing arrow and one with a right-pointing arrow, serving as horizontal scroll controls.

APPENDIX D
TABLES

Table D1

How Dance Helped in Other Academic Classes

Q17b	Please explain why or how dance helped you become more successful in other subjects in school in the text box below.
	Know that I had to do extra rehearsals after school did give me a less time to do my homework at home, so I had to really try my hardest to get my homework done. So, I can continue to perform Nutcracker and maintain my GPA.
	VAPA made it very clear that if I was not successful in my academic classes my dance classes would be affected negatively. Because big performances happened at least twice a year, I always did my best when it came to balancing good grades in all my classes. Overall, a passion to perform, greatly increased my time management skills, which I'm still thankful for today.
	Dance helped me gain more confidence, which helped in other classes because I knew if I could dance confidently then I can turn in and do my work confidently.
	Dance has helped me become more successful in not only other subjects at school, but in overall life in general. A lot of the success, inspiration, and motivation also came from my ballet teacher, Ms. Burleigh. She and dance taught me to be myself and to work hard for everything that I want in life. They also taught me how to express myself and release stress in a healthy, positive way. dance also encouraged me to be more successful in other subjects in school because thriving and doing well in classes and grades meant that I could dance and be in the programs with no problem.
	Dance has helped be because it has given me a reason to be organized and make time to practice and take time to do my schoolwork
	The Nutcracker was a ballet performance I desperately wanted to be a part of. To avoid being pulled out, I knew that I had to maintain a high GPA and do well in all my classes. This standard or requirement made me more determined and enthusiastic about working hard in all my classes. Furthermore, the tricks, technique, and constant practice helped me build skills that I used and continue to use in my academics. Developing time management skills, persevering through challenges, working in teams, multitasking, taking action, and allowing myself to fail and learning from that are just a few of the gifts I gained while being part of The Nutcracker. Aside from the skills I gained, The Nutcracker supported and helped me and many of my classmates get through school. The Nutcracker was our way out of stress and a moment to forget about tests, finals, homework, and other schoolwork. It allowed us to clear out minds and take a moment to center ourselves. It was a relief and coping mechanism that helped us get through it all.
	Dance classes and the performances allowed me to express who I am and let out my feelings which also allowed me to have a clear headspace and focus on becoming successful in my education.
	It helped me to be more dedicated to what I am doing and to be more confident
	A balance of excelling in academic and the arts motivated myself & my peers to strive for better grades. We helped each other & guided ourselves to seek help if we had difficulty with a particular subject. We understand it would take more time & dedication to seek help, however, that is where the balance and discipline of dance motivated us. It reminds us that the reward for good grades, is a spot on the stage.
	I was one of MS. Burleigh's helpers, so I was able to help with teaching and coordinating while still doing class work. I learned how to multitask.
	It definitely motivates me to do better in my classes so I can perform. I've always been on top of my work, but having an extra goal helps me stay motivated.
	Leading up towards the nutcracker everyone wouldn't stop talking about the nutcracker which helped me continue doing good in my classes.
	I had to do well to be able to perform for the nutcracker. That made me more involved and learn better in all my classes! Also, the discipline you learn, and memorization helped me in my normal classes.
	Dancing has helped me be more successful in other subjects at school because I had to learn how to manage my time with practices and homework if I really wanted a chance to dance. I was determined to manage my time to get done with schoolwork which was a priority and dance which is the thing I love to do.
	With focusing on the nutcracker, it made me realize the dedication I had for things, so I just put that towards school.
	Overall, dance motivated me to not let my grades drop.
	Be more confident and try more
	It has helped me do better emotionally and physically
	I think it helped me because knowing that my GPA had to be high it made me want to do better in my school subjects.
	Dance always improved my mood and it motivated me to work hard in other areas.
	Maybe the GPA requirement.
	I was able to stay motivated even though the times were stressful.
	Because you can become more comfortable and responsible.
	I'm not quite sure but I was excited to do my best in other classes in order to stay in the show and also made my days more enjoyable
	It definitely allows me to be able to have a way to be free even if we have choreography. It is still so much fun to be around fellow friends as we talk about how the practice went and talk about how excited we are as the show day gets near.
	Dance has always been effective in my life. Dance class has opened my mind to many possibilities and has made want to learn more. Dancing is about tell a story of some kind. Stories we may learn in different class. Dance exercises my mind and fills it with energy and motivation.
	The nutcracker gave me motivation to strive for better grades than usual because if I wasn't on top of my schedule or grades, I wouldn't be a part of a great performance. I was also taught it's a privilege to be on stage.
	It allowed me the opportunity to practice having dance rehearsal while also having to keep up with homework
	Because if I was failing my class, I wouldn't be able to have the opportunity to be in nutcracker
	As an actor it made me see how dancers work. I am also a dancer, but it was still interesting to see how others work
	dance in general has pushed me to become way more organized and manage time very well than how I used to

Table D2

How Performing in *The Nutcracker* Personally Helped

Q18b	Other ways that performing in <i>The Nutcracker</i> help you (please list below)
	It definitely helped me when it came to being open minded. I was very uncomfortable with performing in tights, and a ballet piece in general. However, having a fun and successful performance left me more open to trying new things.
	releasing stress/anxiety
	physical and mental control
	Diversity in my dance portfolio
	It really helped me become confident and see another side of myself.
	It has allowed me the dream big! Regardless of how long I dreamt of being in an affordable studio since a little girl and performing in the Nutcracker, it finally happened! The best part was that it was through my school, so I didn't have to pay money to gain ballet experience and perform for my FIRST EVER ballet show! I really get emotional because I feel like I actually had a chance to be part of the ballet community and not excluded because of my financial expenses or that I don't have the "ideal" body for a ballerina. The production of the Nutcracker allowed me to feel accepted in the dance community as mu unique self.
	- focusing. - using my potential.
	It just made me happy.
	It provided a sense of community and belonging.
	Made me happy.
	My growth in confidence was something that The Nutcracker helped with.
	Have more confidence. Be more expressive.
	Get experience Able to show what I can do
	Be more comfortable with acting
	performance tells a story and facials are very important

Table D3

How Dance Class Compares to Academic Classes

Q19 What characteristics of dance that make it similar or different from other classes you take at school
Dance will always be different as I'm exerting my energy constantly. You have to be in shape physically or you will struggle. However similar to other classes you also have to focus mentally. VAPA gave us many challenges that revolves around memorization, such as choreography or skills test. This could easily be compared to memorizing English definitions or math formulas.
Characteristics of dance that make it similar to other classes I take at school is that if you want to improve on your skills, you have to practice and study the movement/material in order to be successful. Characteristics that make dance different from other classes is that dance is more of a stress reliever and a space to not have to worry about so much except for dancing, rather than other classes are what cause the stress.
Ballet and The Nutcracker are something special. I know that I struggled immensely with this style and this class, but I learned to appreciate every aspect of it. It's beauty, technique, and ability to strengthen a dancer is remarkable. Therefore, many dance teachers and dance classes incorporate ballet. Ballet is used in almost every style: in small or large gestures or quantities. Ballet has been infused with different styles in different ways and only continues to flourish from its modern form. The Nutcracker also continues to expand and share a similar storyline that people enjoy. It is something that people eagerly wait to see and be a part of. It has become an important factor of the holiday season and dance careers for many dancers. It brings joy and admiration to the viewer, performer, and instructors.
I felt dance was completely different from other classes more so because of the physical aspect of having to use our body's. However, I do see one similarity and that would be that we would take notes on dance related subjects like the history of dance, dynamics, etc.
You feel more responsibility for what you are doing
School and dance are tough, but they're worth it. Striving for an extra pirouette, is worth all the aches and pains to gain that turn. A few extra points on an exam are worth the late nights & extra studying for that "C" to turn into a "B." Discipline and motivation are significant in all aspects of education & physical demanding lifestyles. What motivates me to get up in the morning? The ability to move. To be able to walk & stretch in the morning. Discipline is not staying in bed all day but taking advantage of moveable joints & muscles. Motivating yourself to read an extra five pages of your textbook for school, so that it saves you ten minutes the following day.
Time passed by really fast getting ready so that was difference I experience
Before dance I took 6 years of violin lessons, they're both similar in a way but also very different. In dance you get more freedom to express yourself in however way you'd like however in music there really isn't any "freedom" because if you try to have your "freedom" you would completely mess up the whole piece.
Dance is a way of letting go and having fun. I can't do that in my normal classes. It's not an easier class but it helps a lot with class.
Disciple, passion, determination, and PRACTICE. These characteristics are essential to both school and dance in order to succeed, grow/get better in the skill, and be responsible.
Being/ using my confidence is one major similarity I have noticed I used along with other dance classes.
Similar: - the importance of paying attention - practice is key - present in front of others - memorization is important Difference: - dance is physical
It allows me to express my emotions more and be more comfortable around people, as well it allows me to take risks in life.
The Nutcracker is a very happy and cheerful dance and a lot of other dances I did were not.
Open mindedness in dance is similar to other classes in school because it allows me to get the best possible results from a wider range of options.
I would say the connections and just the way you express yourself.
Ballet is the foundation of every dance style, so it made me a stronger dancer.
We have a choreographer /Do own choreography.
Like in any class, you have to stay focused and on track. Dance classes are definitely more enjoyable due to being able to move around and not sit in a chair all class. But also, there's a lot of memorizations that goes in both dance and regular classes.
A characteristic of dance that make it different from other classes I've taken at school is that, in dance class I am able to move around and not glued to a desk for hours. I am able to express freely my thoughts and doubts without having to be subjected into explaining.
I can freely express my way of movement through dance class instead of academic classes. Expressing those movements make me feel free to myself.
Nutcracker is great because it's all the technique and everything you learn from class, combined with a performance opportunity and Christmas spirit
It makes me happy
Dance is fun
time management and being attentive is what is very similar to classes

Table D4

Skills Gained from Performing Arts Dance Program

Q20 Can you identify skills that you specifically learn in Dance Class or in performing <i>The Nutcracker</i> that will help you in your in your future?
Dance class has helped me in many ways. I now have a way to express my feelings without words. This saves me a lot of stress as I often choose to dance rather than talk. Dance has given me a reason to do my best in my academics. I want to have a future in dance, so I use that as motivation to get a diploma. Dance helps me be patient in every aspect of my life. Growing in dance is not an easy task, sticking to it without being impatient is necessary in order to see growth. I apply that idea to every party of my life now. I could go on and on, but that's just a few skills I've gained.
Work hard and persevere, no matter how many times it takes to get it right. Be patient with yourself. Take the time to practice until you get it. You have to work and grow through the pain in order to get to where you want/need to be
A handful of skills I learned throughout dance class and the Nutcracker would be dynamics and the different kinds of dynamics, learning how to conserve our energy as a dancer, what if truly means to have stage etiquette, stage presence, and professionalism.
Discipline, Communication
I was a lead role, Clara, of the 2018 Nutcracker performance. What I realized then-to-now, was I could not slack off. I had a partner that had to lift me & was providing the same intention and support to make this an unforgettable role. What I mean by that was, I should have eaten better, stretched more & kept my body in tune with a ballet performance. Two years have passed, and I frequently look back at the time I was a senior in high school performing for one of the last times on that stage. In present day, I now have a better connection and relationship with exercise and food intake. No distractions & focusing on my internal health. Throughout my years of dancing, I have improved my idea of "health." The skill that I have undertook is, keep my body healthy right now & I shall not have health consequences later on in life.
I learned that life moves fast and at time you just need to go with it. As wellbeing mindful of what you're doing
I gained confidence. Entering dance having no experience in dance really made me feel less than the other who had no trouble dancing in class.
I learned how to work in big group's, patience, memorization, thinking under pressure and getting out of my comfort zone.
Being responsible and time management. Those skills were so essential in performing the Nutcracker because I am responsible for learning and practicing my choreography on my own, no one is going to tell me I have to so I must do that in the future and it's a great practice to start young. Time management is something important to the future that I learned and applied in the Nutcracker because I had to be wise with my schoolwork and practicing my movement. I kept a planner handy to remind me of what time is more convenient to do my work, dance, and be my own teenage self.
Using my balance, it is something that I have to use for every class. So having to preform, if reminded me that I can balance myself to achieve the steps I need.
The Nutcracker and dance have taught me that teamwork is a very important and valuable skill to have.
Be confident and expressive
Since I want to be a choreographer and a performer expressing myself and building my confidence is a huge skill I took from my classes.
A lot of it was learning to have facial expressions.
Work ethic and expressiveness in performance.
I learn self-discipline and perseverance.
Keeping my connection.
Posture, Flexibility, Strength, Stamina
Some skills are memorizing, coordination, staying focus, teamwork mentality, and persistence.
Skills such as technique and musicality.
Skills that I've have learned from and in dance class and performing The Nutcracker would be, I learned problem-solving. I may have been early on a count was a little bit early than others, but I managed to find a way to fix my mistake and get back on track. I've learned teamwork mentality; I was always used to working alone but in dance I've learned that a lot can be accomplish and learned if we just work and put our minds together. Perseverance is something I specially had to learned, it is a must skill. We must have what they call "thick-skin", as much as you get compliments and praises, you will get 2x the criticism and the advice. Some may be hurtful to hear but it must be heard.
Gaining arm strengths with holding port the bra and leg strength by different warm up exercises that will help me for military training in the future.
I think teamwork is the main skill we learn because of how many people go into the production. From dancers to tech to teachers and costume makers. Everyone's role is important
Learning how to act
Flexibility training, Acting training
In the future I want to be a professional dancer and nutcracker and other dance classes have allowed me to practice technique and facial expressions that will help me going forward in life

Table D5

How Skills Can Be Utilized in Future

Q21 How do you see yourself using the skills you listed above in your future or if you are an alumnus how have the skills you listed above helped you?
I already use them every day. I dance every week multiple times as a way to grow and stay sane. I'm a full-time college student pushing through because of dance. I'm patient with myself, my family, friends, etc. because I know I need to be. I'm constantly using the skills I've gained.
The skills above have helped me because they made me realize that whatever I put my mind to, I can do. They made me realize that I am a lot stronger than I think I am. These skills also taught me to be more understanding with myself and with others, but to most of all be patient with myself. These skills also helped me to push myself, even during the times that I feel like I can't keep pushing. Lastly, they have helped and inspired me to keep working hard for whatever I want to achieve in my life.
Being an alumnus, my skills have helped me to excel in my professional career as a dancer. I have dwelled more into these skills since leaving high school however high school did first make me aware. Having been in a music video and a stage performance for Jimmy Fallon I had to have stage presence and etiquette throughout the whole experience. Conserving our energy while dancing full out for almost five minutes straight was very important for us too. I feel as though these qualities also tie into professionalism and being able to deliver a great performance for an audience. Professionalism creates trust within the people you are associated with through dance and that will allow you to become more successful.
In class when doing projects or just signing up for classes
I do not have to look a certain way to seem healthy. It is merely how I feel & how I will continue to improve my physical and internal health.
I use in my college class and when it comes down to finals weeks. As well as knowing the appreciate what I'm going through because I won't go through it again
Confidence is a real skill to develop, without confidence you feel less and don't value yourself
I have to get used to being uncomfortable because in the real world that's the only way you learn.
I see myself using these skills when I go into college and in the dance industry because I'm going to be really busy if I want to pursue dance. It's my responsibility to keep track of my work and dance and manage my time on it.
I definitely see myself using that in future classes. It's something I should already be using in classes, I just forget. But now that I have performed, it has reminded me how useful it is.
Teamwork comes in handy when assigned group work in future classes and group projects in future jobs.
To get better at school
I am comfortable talking to new people so that will help me getting to know people so they can connect me to others who can help and support my career.
Yes, I do. I do need to work on my facial expressions.
Yes, I do.
I can use self-discipline and perseverance to give my best and work to my full potential in future jobs or opportunities.
It's very important for dance so you'll always need it.
I will definitely use these skills in the future. I think a big one for me was stamina because that is something I can use in dance and in life.
These skills are always used in any learning setting whether it's school, dance, sports, etc. these skills come in handy.
I can help when people appear to not look sturdy enough reminding them of tiny details to tweak.
I see myself using the skills almost every time I decide to dance in front of a person. The Team Mentality skills are used always when I have projects in another class or when I'm working with people. The skill that I learned I am open to people's suggestions and ideas on how to make something better. Problem solving is one of the most effective skills someone could learn and use. Nurse tuition I'm stuck in or I'm going to be stuck in problem-solving will be easy and it will be hard at times, but it won't be impossible.
I want to attend the military and those muscle in important area will be a great help by gaining more muscle as I progress from it.
I think it shows how many job opportunities there is in the arts industry and teamwork is a crucial skill for the work environment
Be stricter with my body
They are basic things you need in dance
yes, most definitely I see myself using those skills

Table D6

Feeling When in Dance Class

Q22 How do you feel when you are in dance class?
As of today, I feel I'm great in dance class because I'm inspired. I now have an understanding that I want to dance for as long as possible, so I take each class as an opportunity to grow.
I haven't been in a dance class for a long time but when I am, I feel free, happy, calm, expressive, and able to relieve my stress and anxieties.
When I am in a dance class, I am filled with appreciation, joy, passion, and strength that no other sport, activity, practice can't make me feel. It is an art so precious and powerful that allows me to free myself. Everything seems to fall into place when I'm dancing. The feeling is so unique, almost impossible to explain. All I can really say is that nothing has ever made me feel the way I do when I dance.
I feel free and that I am present. I am in the moment, and it allows me to focus on how my body truly feels when I move in the way that I do and that is a very beautiful thing. When I'm in this headspace, I feel it allows for a better outcome.
Free and calm
I feel focused. Nobody to compete with & no one to compare myself to. I am focused on how I can push myself a certain way in each class. What can I do today that will help me improve? Being in a dance class, feels professional. Any class is an opportunity to meet someone new & learn about something you had never done before. Walking and being present in a dance class feels different that walking into a classroom or into a restaurant. You are there to listen, absorb & move!
I feel in my zone and at peace
I felt happy because it was such a huge distraction of the stress of a classroom although sometimes, I felt really tired and felt really overwhelmed due to past classes but that all changes as soon as I entered dance territory
I feel excited to learn new choreography or step.
I feel free, explorative, and passionate in dance class.
Ballet has always been an amazing dance class for me, but it's just not for me, but I love it, plus it teaches great technique.
I feel happy because it's fun to learn new choreography.
Really fun and expressive
I feel happy but it's not what I'm passionate about
When I enter my classes I feel excited to learn and just dance.
I feel manly happy that I get to move my body.
Really good its great exercise and super fun because I'm friends with all everyone.
I feel relieved and empowered.
I feel good.
I feel good when I am in dance class. I feel comfortable with the space I am provided with.
Pretty nicely.
I always feel a sense of joy and pride. It's always fun to go to dance class even if I lack energy. It keeps me motivated.
Alive, energetic, excited.
It all depends on the mood of the atmosphere in the class. Some Days the classes are long and exhausting but other times it is very exciting and buzzing with fun. But overall, I am just so happy to be able to dance and learn so many things. I feel like it is the one place I could truly be myself without having to be judged on my moves because we all have different styles and different ways we dance.
I feel alive, I may be a little sleepy but doing warmups and feeling my bones crack is an amazing feeling.
I feel happy and ready to learn and improve. Even if it's only a little bit each time I'm in class
Happy
Free
I feel free and like I can let my emotions free without talking

Table D7

How Dancing Different Styles of Dance Affected Dancer

Q23 Do you feel different when you dance different styles of dance?
I do, every style makes me feel different. I'm definitely more comfortable in specific styles. However, I have clear examples of styles I didn't like in the past helping me in my favorite styles. I now do my best regardless of my feelings for the style.
No, I do not feel so different when I dance different styles of dance.
There are styles where I have difficulties learning the technique or getting myself used to the various concepts. I do get insecure and sometimes lack motivation; however, every dance style I have danced so far only makes me love this art form even more. Some styles can involve more cardio heavy
I do feel different dancing different styles because each style brings out different sides of me. Hip hop brings out the more grimy, more full-out side of me, while ballet brings out the focused and articulate side out. That also goes for jazz, but jazz also makes me feel upbeat and happy.
Yes, if they are the ones, I'm comfortable with I am less shy if they aren't I am very shy
I feel bizarre. I remember taking my first flamenco class and thinking 'this is not tap, I must use my heel?!' Of course, I try my best but learning a new style feels like a kindergartner learning the letters of the alphabet. It's normal, but not normal to you.
Yes, but they all bring me some type of joy
Yes, I do feel different. When I dance tap, I feel happy and when I dance Ballet or contemporary, I get a bit more serious and a bit less happy.
Yes!! Every dance style makes me feel different and show different energies.
Yes, because different styles require different techniques, however, every style is connected to one another in a special way that helps me get through class.
When it comes to ballet, I feel like I have to use all my strength in that class. But compared to other classes, I feel I could just be looser and more put more of my style into it.
Motivation wise I do. There are some styles that aren't for me and find very boring. In these cases, I feel bored when learning. However, if it's a style that pique's my interest then my energy goes up.
No
yes
Most things can be new to me so yes, I feel different but it's a good different because that means I get to learn a new style which I can progress from.
Yes, I do because different styles have different emotions,
Yes, of course, different styles bring out the different emotions they intend to evoke.
Different styles help me identify with different emotions. One class can trigger happiness, and another can release built up anger or some other feeling.
Definitely yes.
I feel different at first but am soon able to adjust and give my 100% to the dance style given.
Affirmative.
Yes, I feel different dancing different styles. Either I feel confident in one style than another or I enjoy a certain style more than another.
I feel unique, I like when we learn about the history because it helps us understand where the dance originated from.
yes, most definitely I have my own style in which I dance, I have styles I'm good at and others in where I need improvement. dancing a style that I'm not really good at is very challenging. You get correction, criticism, and advice sometimes you don't ask but you still receive. Not knowing what you're doing but still doing it very different and uncomfortable a Time, but we have to keep going if you want to succeed.
Yes
Yes. I think it has a lot to do with the type of music that is played with each style too
No, I'm always happy
Yes
yes, different songs have me think of different moves that will go to the music

Table D8

Feeling While Performing on Stage

Q24 How did you feel when you performed The Nutcracker?
I felt uncomfortable, I felt nervous, I felt unprepared. Although I was an insecure sophomore. Nonetheless that performance was a pivotal step in my love for dance. I had to experience dance at its scariest to understand how much I had to grow.
When I performed The Nutcracker, I felt so happy and felt like I was in a whole other world when I was performing on stage. I felt free and felt very elegant when I was performing on stage. Performing The Nutcracker also helped me feel a sense of inclusion among everyone.
I felt great performing it because it was something different than what I'm used to. I was happy performing because it is what I love to do, and it just made a more well-rounded dancer after that experience.
I felt proud and happy also honored
I felt like I had something to offer when I performed for The Nutcracker. It wasn't just about me; it was all types of dancers with different strengths. The first thing I thought when I stepped onto that stage was, "Who can I inspire today?" I felt that I could not let anyone down & I had to lead.
I felt so blessed because not so many people Can experience putting on a full production
I felt a good overwhelmed if that makes sense. I loved the whole backstage vibe; I loved the feeling before going on stage. I loved everything it was all worth it.
I felt very happy and Christmasy.
I felt accepted when I performed the Nutcracker. I felt a great amount of joy and excitement because it was my first ever ballet show. I remember watching from the sideline before the Spanish section (my part), I was watching the Sugar Plum fairy's waltz and with the lights and the costumes! I remember tearing up because I've always dreamt of this experience, and I finally had the chance to dance. I remember wanting to be as good as the Sugar Plum fairy because I was finally getting the chance to learn ballet and until this day, I use the Pas de Deux song as motivation when I'm conditioning or practicing pirouettes so that I can get better at dance.
I felt really nervous. I hadn't preformed in a long time.
I felt very happy because I was excited to share to the audience the work that I had put in.
Very excited
I feel really happy.
It was really strenuous physically, but overall, very joyous.
I felt happy and full of purpose.
I was proud of myself and everyone that was on the stage with me.
I felt good. I felt proud after performing The Nutcracker.
I really enjoyed my scene (the party scene). It was fun to dance too, and I felt a rush of excitement on the stage. Even if my legs go numb at one point from sitting on stage, it was all part of the experience. I was really excited to do it again this year and was really looking forward to it.
It feels like a rush of excitement, it's lovely to see everyone get comfortable around each other.
I felt nervous but overall, I was ecstatic. It's a very indescribable feeling. To be able to dance and enjoy having light on me when I dance is amazing. I'm glad I got an opportunity to get experience on stage and performing. It's one thing I never thought I would be able to do but fortunately I did. The adrenaline rush you get when you're moving back and forth between Late rehearsals and early rehearsals and costume changes and doing makeup and getting into your spots before a call is amazing. And mainly being in such a Christmas spirit the one thing that causes so much joy to people. Looking around the set and seeing all the decorations and colorful stuff. Having to wear such colorful and fun costumes, dancing to wonderful joyous music is life changing.
Amazing, it was great performing on stage and seeing different costumes. My first time and it was like a magical dream.
It was a really nice experience and I felt so glad to be a part of my schools' performance. Since I was new to the school and came into the semester late, I was so glad to receive a last-minute roll a day before the show.
Very excited and as it I was made to do it
Immaculate but I feel I could've done better
I felt good that I had the confidence to do it and after I got off stage, I felt really good about my performance

Table D9

Performing Arts Dance School/Performing in *The Nutcracker* Sentiments

Q25 Please List Any Other Addition Comments You Would Like to Share About Your Experience In a Performing Arts Dance School or Performing in <i>The Nutcracker</i> .
VAPA was great because the teacher was great. When I went it was full of passionate teachers who had their student's growth in mind each class. I can't thank them enough for helping me fall in love with dance. So, if there's anyone to give credit too, it's the teachers.
Attending a performing arts school actually helped to shape the person that I am today. It allowed me to learn many different things, artistry, and different cultures, and helped me learn to get along with all different types of people.
Being in a performing arts high school was very important for me considering what I wanted to do as a career which is dance. Being surrounded by people who also have the same drive and ambition was very important to me too because the people around me pushed each other to become better at what we did. We loved what we did, and we didn't let anybody stop us from achieving our dreams. I feel that was the energy throughout the school because we were there for a reason and that was to become more well-rounded in what we loved.
I loved it
It was one of the best experiences and I'll carry it in my heart forever because I was able to work aside one of the best dance teachers I know. Who dedicates everything she has into that production. As wellbeing own the helpers and learning choreography and teaching it was the best.
Well, something else that I liked was after the show...All of the friends and families taking pictures with their kids and the overall feeling of joy.
It was unforgettable and definitely my favorite aspect of the holiday season.
It was very helpful, fun a lovely to participate in such as beautiful scenery
It was actually really fun and enjoyable to be in it. All the dancers looked really amazing when they danced.
Th Nutcracker was really enjoyable because it made me feel more connected to my peers and it was the highlight of the year.
It's an amazing experience and I hope I get to experience the Rush that I get before going on the stage.
It was a super great production put on and everyone felt included which was super great for us, the students.
If I hadn't done the Nutcracker, if I hadn't performed in the Nutcracker, I don't think I would be the person I am today. Having that experience made me who I am. It's a wonderful thing to be able to perform art in school. It gives a chance to others who aren't able to do stuff like that out of school. It also gives students a way to express who they truly are and to find who they want to be and to know where they're going. It's just a way to know exactly what you want to know.
It's a really great feeling to be a part of something so big and beautiful
I've only done it once and it was so much fun

Table D10

Words That Describe Dancer Before Attending Performing Arts Dance Program

Q26 What Words Describes You Before and After Taking Dance Class?
Before class I'm usually hyped. I get very excited for class. After class I'm usually inspired. I learn a lot in most of my classes which gives me inspiration to apply it.
Before: shy, anxious, limited. After: creative, passionate, unlimited, patient, persevering
Before taking dance class, I would always be excited and happy because I'm getting the opportunity to better myself in a different light. After class, depending on the situation, I would either be happy or frustrated but I never let those feelings determined whether I was proud of myself or not. I was always proud because in some way, shape, or form I learned something new that day.
Talented and determined before and after
Nervous, focused, stiff, determined. Loose, confident, professional, focused.
Shy, Evolved
before I felt really stuck emotionally but as I started doing dance, I felt myself releasing all of those emotions.
I feel better about myself and it's so fun! I feel Confidence, happiness, and excitement.
Before taking dance class I am determined on learning something new. After taking dance class I feel relieved and filled with information.
I was definitely less experienced in ballet before the class, and now I am more confident when it comes to performing.
unmotivated; motivated
Shy, and expressive
I felt, but insecure of me but now I feel sure of myself and my body
Before class excited and eager to learn and after class I am thrilled that I have learned something new and progressed with my work.
Before: tired, lazy, unmotivated. After: full of energy, happy and motivated.
Before: Sluggish, tired. After: flushed, refreshed,
Before class, I'm tired or anxious. After class, I'm relieved or satisfied.
Before tired and after happy.
Shy, Open, Confident.
Coordination. Confidence.
A sense of comfort
Before dance class I don't have as much energy as I normally would depending on the day. After dance class I feel more awake and ready to face any challenges.
Words that describe me before: Tired, Energetic, Boring, Dull. Words that describe me after: Energetic, ecstatic, happy, eager, good-tired, relaxed, and motivated
Before taking class, I wouldn't want to get up and feel like I don't want to get up and go but the after feeling of class makes my bones and muscles tired and feel great.
Before I am motivated and energized and after I am tired but accomplished. I am still energized but in a new way
Sad and happy
Before: carefree After: more passionate
excited, eager to learn, and fascinate

Table D11

How Others Describe the Dancer

Q27 How Would Others (Parents, Teachers, Friends) Describe You Now?
They'd probably describe me as different. When I first started dancing, I wasn't confident, and slightly lazy. I now look at dance in a completely different light. I'm inspired, always training, teaching, etc. Part of this transformation was me finding a love for a style I had no idea existed. Although that change was pretty drastic.
Independent, positive, strong, energetic, and hardworking.
I feel they would describe me to be determined, ambitious, and goal oriented.
Outgoing. Determined
My parents would describe me as self-motivated. A little concerned with my health habits, but as long as they see me eat, they know I am taking care of my inner well-being.
Outgoing. Open minded
I feel like everyone has different opinions on me for example to my mom I am very playful and childish but also very mature. To my friends they would describe me as the adventurous one in the group but also very serious in some way and well to my teachers I'm not quite sure.
Kind person
They would describe me that I have grown so much I dance and from performances.
My mom said I seem more confident when it comes to dancing.
They'll describe as a happy person now.
Be secure of myself
I hope they think I'm intuitive and a hard worker.
I think they would describe me as kind.
100% hottie
They would describe me as hard working and full of potential.
Strong.
They would describe me as a confident person.
More expressive.
People would describe me as energetic, shy, but also confident.
I think they would say I've changed from freshmen year to now.
Weird, crazy, very energetic at times, always coming up with things, always dancing no matter a situation where I am or what time it is. Sometimes weirdly annoying. Always striving no matter what.
The same, they're still proud they see me in dance, running long distance, and commuting to outside programs.
I think I have definitely grown as a dancer and person in the sense of having more confidence
I'm not sure
More outgoing and comfortable, more outspoken, more developed, more confident
very willing to know things I didn't and eager to learn new things

Table D12

Importance of Performing Arts Dance School Education

Q28 How Important Do You Feel Attending a Performing Arts Dance School Is/Was to You and Why?
I give my school credit for helping me find my love for dance. I fell in love with dance my junior year and it changed my life. If any other kid has the chance to experience this change, I'd say it's absolutely necessary!
I feel it's very important to attend a performing dance arts school because it gives many kids opportunities that they would not have gotten anywhere else. It also gives kids the chance to learn new things that they would not have had learned if they attended a regular school. Attending performing arts schools opens and offers so many life-changing opportunities that kids would not have gotten or heard of if they attended a regular school with no performing arts.
I felt it was important to me to attend a performing arts high school because it would take me out of my comfort zone considering I was a shy person growing up. It made me more social in a sense and I finally felt like I could just talk to people without being nervous.
I feel ok, good experience
I grew up being trained in a private dance studio. I listened to teenagers being accepted in some sort of "dance school." I grew up intending to enroll in the same school. My mom found VAPA and I applied. Once I was there, every day was a dream. I loved going to school. I admired school since I was in primary school but being in a place where I could learn & dance (FOR FREE) was spectacular.
It was where I was able to find what makes me happy. As well experience what an actual dance class feels like because where I grew up you don't get those chance and opportunities.
Well to be honest it really wasn't a "new" thing since I had already been in music school except VAPA was way bigger and you saw a little of everything.
I feel very lucky to be attending a performing dance art school. I experience things most kids don't ever. It had made me the person I am today.
It's important to me because I finally had a chance to be trained in technique on various dance styles without having to worry about paying a lot for studios.
Even though I enjoy and am good at just being studious, I feel like choosing an art school was the right choice for me, I feel like I can express myself more, which I love.
Attending a performing arts dance school is very important and still is because if I would have attended a "regular" school, I know for a fact that my grades would not have been as high as they are now.
Very important because it show the effort that I performed in the year
It is really important to be because dance is going to be my career and going to class is learning so if I can learn I can grow as a dancer.
I feel like it's important because I feel like I can express myself through dance a lot better than I can through words. I also feel way more comfortable with the people around me. I feel like a family.
It's really important to me to have art and dance in my life because it is a break from the sometimes monotonous nature of school.
Attending a performing arts school is important to me because it gives me a healthy balance. It's important to have access to a mental/emotional release. It lifts your spirits and stimulates your brain. I remove clutter from my mind when I dance, which increases my academic performance and strengthens my mental health.
I think it gives you more opportunities which is important, and you also get to experience many different things.
I think that it is very important attending a performing arts dance school because it is a very unique experience. I am able to do something I like in school and others aren't, so I find that very important different for me.
I feel very comfortable because is one of the most important high school in performance.
It was really important to me because dance is such a huge part of my life and incorporating that to my daily life helps me keep me motivated and happy.
I've always wanted to learn more about dance to experience different styles and I have been given this opportunity.
It is so important to me that people attend the performances because as a performer I work so hard and practice so hard, I put my time on the dance in which I'm going to perform. It would be so disappointing for me to do all that work and have no one show up. no one to see How hard I worked. Learning and perfecting a choreo takes such dedication and so much time out of your life. But the reward for that is watching people smile and taking awe in the work that you've done.
Not as important because I'm not planning to attend an arts school when I graduate but it is fun to distract myself with.
I think it's so amazing that I am able to receive a free arts education. That's why I originally came to this school because dance classes outside of school get really expensive. I love my school, arts classes, and teachers :)
Very important I feel like I would be lost if I went to a regular school
Personally, before I even knew I came to this school I took 2 years off of dance, so it was really nice
I feel well for me at least is very important because I know how to manage my everyday life and my dance life and how to make Time for both to be good in both aspects

Table D13

Motivation Responses

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 1	excited, <u>eager to learn</u> , and fascinated
Dancer 10	I felt good. I <u>felt proud</u> after performing The Nutcracker.
Dancer 10	I feel different at first but am soon able to adjust and <u>give my 100%</u> to the dance style given.
Dancer 10	I <u>feel good</u> when I am in dance class. I feel comfortable with the space I am provided with.
Dancer 10	Ballet is the foundation of every dance style, so it made me a <u>stronger dancer</u> .
Dancer 10	I was able to stay <u>motivated</u> even though the times were stressful.
Dancer 11	I think it gives you <u>more opportunities</u> which is important, and you also get to experience many different things.
Dancer 11	Before tired and after <u>happy</u> .
Dancer 11	It's an amazing experience and I hope I get to <u>experience the Rush</u> that I get before going on the stage.
Dancer 11	I <u>feel good</u> .
Dancer 11	It's very important for dance so you'll always <u>need</u> it.
Dancer 11	Made me <u>happy</u> .
Dancer 11	Maybe the <u>GPA</u> requirement.
Dancer 12	They would describe me as <u>hard working</u> and full of potential.
Dancer 12	I felt happy and <u>full of purpose</u> .
Dancer 12	Dance always improved my mood and it <u>motivated</u> me to work hard in other areas.
Dancer 13	It's really important to me to have art and dance in my life because it is a <u>break from the sometimes monotonous nature of school</u> .
Dancer 13	Before: Sluggish, tired. After: flushed, <u>refreshed</u>
Dancer 13	It was really strenuous physically, but overall, very <u>joyous</u> .
Dancer 14	Before: tired, lazy, unmotivated. After: full of energy, happy and <u>motivated</u> .
Dancer 14	I feel manly happy that I <u>get to move my body</u> .
Dancer 14	It just made me <u>happy</u> .
Dancer 14	I think it helped me because knowing that my <u>GPA</u> had to be high it made me want to do better in my school subjects.
Dancer 14	I feel really <u>happy</u> .
Dancer 15	I hope they think I'm intuitive and a <u>hard worker</u> .
Dancer 15	Before class excited and eager to learn and after class I am thrilled that I have <u>learned something new</u> and progressed with my work.
Dancer 15	When I enter my classes I <u>feel excited</u> to learn and just dance.
Dancer 16	I feel <u>happy</u> but it's not what I'm passionate about
Dancer 17	Very important because it <u>shows the effort</u> that I performed in the year
Dancer 17	To <u>get better at school</u>
Dancer 17	Very <u>excited</u>
Dancer 18	Attending a performing arts dance school is very important and still is because if I would have attended a "regular" school, I know for a fact that my <u>grades</u> would not have been as high as they are now.

Table D13 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 18	unmotivated; <u>motivated</u>
Dancer 18	<u>Motivation</u> wise I do. There are some styles that aren't for me and find very boring. In these cases, I feel bored when learning. However, if it's a style that pique's my interest then my energy goes up.
Dancer 18	Similar: - the importance of paying attention - practice is key - present in front of others - memorization is important. Difference: - dance is <u>physical</u>
Dancer 18	Overall, dance <u>motivated</u> me to not let my grades drop.
Dancer 19	I felt really nervous. <u>I hadn't performed in a long time.</u>
Dancer 19	Ballet has always been an amazing dance class for me, but it's just not for me, but I love it, plus it <u>teaches great technique.</u>
Dancer 19	I definitely see myself using that in <u>future classes.</u> It's something I should already be using in classes, I just forget. But now that I have performed, it has reminded me how useful it is.
Dancer 2	Personally, before I even knew I came to this school I took 2 years off of dance, so it was really <u>nice</u>
Dancer 2	They are <u>basic things you need</u> in dance
Dancer 2	Dance is <u>fun</u>
Dancer 20	It's important to me because I finally had a chance to be trained in technique on various dance styles <u>without having to worry about paying</u> a lot for studios.
Dancer 20	Before taking dance class I am determined on learning something new. After taking dance class I <u>feel relieved</u> and filled with information.
Dancer 20	It was unforgettable and definitely my <u>favorite aspect of the holiday season.</u>
Dancer 20	I felt accepted when I performed the Nutcracker. I felt a great amount of joy and excitement because it was my first ever ballet show. I remember watching from the sideline before the Spanish section (my part), I was watching the Sugar Plum fairy's waltz and with the lights and the costumes! I remember tearing up because I've always dreamt of this experience, and I finally had the chance to dance. I remember wanting to be as good as the Sugar Plum fairy because I was finally getting the chance to learn ballet and until this day, I use the Pas de Deux song as <u>motivation</u> when I'm conditioning or practicing pirouettes so that I can get better at dance.
Dancer 20	Yes, because different styles require different techniques, however, every style is connected to one another in a special way that <u>helps me get through class.</u>
Dancer 20	I see myself using these skills when I go into college and in the dance industry because I'm going to be really busy if I <u>want to pursue dance.</u> It's my responsibility to keep track of my work and dance and manage my time on it.
Dancer 20	It has allowed me the dream big! Regardless of how long I dreamt of being in an <u>affordable</u> studio since a little girl and performing in the Nutcracker, it finally happened! The best part was that it was through my school, so I didn't have to pay money to gain ballet experience and perform for my FIRST EVER ballet show! I really get emotional because I feel like I actually had a chance to be part of the ballet community and not excluded because of my financial expenses or that I don't have the "ideal" body for a ballerina. The production of the Nutcracker allowed me to feel accepted in the dance community as my unique self.
Dancer 20	Dancing has helped me be more successful in other subjects at school because I had to learn how to <u>manage my time</u> with practices and homework if I really wanted a chance to dance. I was determined to manage my time to get done with schoolwork which was a priority and dance which is the thing I love to do.
Dancer 21	I felt very happy and <u>Christmasy.</u>
Dancer 21	Dance is a <u>way of letting go</u> and having fun. I can't do that in my normal classes. It's not an easier class but it helps a lot with class.
Dancer 27	I feel in my zone and <u>at peace</u>

Table D13 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 21	I had to do well to be able to perform for the nutcracker. That made me more involved and learn better in all my classes! Also, the discipline you learn, and memorization <u>helped me in my normal classes.</u>
Dancer 22	Yes, I do feel different. When I dance tap, <u>I feel happy</u> and when I dance Ballet or contemporary, I get a bit more serious and a bit less happy.
Dancer 22	I felt happy because it was such a huge <u>distraction from the stress of a classroom</u> although sometimes, I felt really tired and felt really overwhelmed due to past classes but that all changes as soon as I entered dance territory
Dancer 22	Leading up towards the nutcracker everyone wouldn't stop talking about the nutcracker which helped me continue <u>doing good in my classes.</u>
Dancer 26	It definitely <u>motivates</u> me to do better in my classes so I can perform. I've always been on top of my work, but having an extra goal helps me stay motivated.
Dancer 27	I felt so blessed because not so many people Can <u>experience</u> putting on a full production
Dancer 27	I <u>use in my college class</u> and when it comes down to finals weeks. As well as knowing the appreciate what I'm going through because I won't go through it again
Dancer 27	Yes, but they all bring me some type of <u>joy</u>
Dancer 28	School and dance are tough, but they're worth it. Striving for an extra pirouette, is worth all the aches and pains to gain that turn. A few extra points on an exam are worth the late nights & extra studying for that "C" to turn into a "B." Discipline and <u>motivation</u> are significant in all aspects of education & physical demanding lifestyles. What motivates me to get up in the morning? The ability to move. To be able to walk & stretch in the morning. Discipline is not staying in bed all day but taking advantage of moveable joints & muscles. Motivating yourself to read an extra five pages of your textbook for school, so that it saves you ten minutes the following day.
Dancer 28	A balance of excelling in academic and the arts motivated myself & my peers to strive for <u>better grades.</u> We helped each other & guided ourselves to seek help if we had difficulty with a particular subject. We understand it would take more time & dedication to seek help, however, that is where the balance and discipline of dance motivated us. It reminds us that the reward for good grades, is a spot on the stage.
Dancer 28	I feel <u>bizarre.</u> I remember taking my first flamenco class and thinking 'this is not tap, I must use my heel?!' Of course, I try my best but learning a new style feels like a kindergartner learning the letters of the alphabet. It's normal, but not normal to you.
Dancer 29	I felt proud and happy also <u>honored</u>
Dancer 29	Free and <u>calm</u>
Dancer 29	I <u>loved</u> it
Dancer 3	Very important. <u>I feel like I would be lost if I went to a regular school</u>
Dancer 3	I've only done it once and it was so much <u>fun</u>
Dancer 3	<u>Happy</u>
Dancer 3	It makes me <u>happy</u>
Dancer 3	No, I'm always <u>happy</u>
Dancer 3	Because if I was <u>failing my class,</u> I would not be able to have the opportunity to be in nutcracker
Dancer 3	Very <u>excited</u> and as it I was made to do it
Dancer 30	Diversity in my dance <u>portfolio</u>
Dancer 30	I felt dance was completely different from other classes more so because of the <u>physical</u> aspect of having to use our bodies. However, I do see one similarity and that would be that we would take notes on dance related subjects like the history of dance, dynamics, etc.

Table D13 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 31	There are styles where I have difficulties learning the technique or getting myself used to the various concepts. I do get insecure and sometimes lack motivation; however, every dance style I have danced so far only <u>makes me love this art form even more</u> . Some styles can involve more cardio heavy
Dancer 31	The Nutcracker was a ballet performance I desperately wanted to be a part of. To avoid being pulled out, I knew that I had to maintain a high GPA and do well in all my classes. This standard or requirement made me more determined and enthusiastic about working hard in all my classes. Furthermore, the tricks, technique, and constant practice helped me build skills that I used and continue to use in my academics. Developing time management skills, persevering through challenges, working in teams, multitasking, taking action, and allowing myself to fail and learning from that are just a few of the gifts I gained while being part of The Nutcracker. Aside from the skills I gained, The Nutcracker supported and helped me and many of my classmates get through school. The Nutcracker was our way out of stress and a moment to forget about tests, finals, homework, and other schoolwork. It allowed us to clear out minds and take a moment to center ourselves. It was a relief and <u>coping mechanism</u> that helped us get through it all.
Dancer 32	Dance has helped me because it has given me a reason to <u>be organized</u> and make time to practice and take time to do my schoolwork
Dancer 33	Characteristics of dance that make it similar to other classes I take at school is that if you want to improve on your skills, you have to practice and study the movement/material in order to be <u>successful</u> . Characteristics that make dance different from other classes is that dance is more of a stress reliever and a space to not have to worry about so much except for dancing, rather than other classes are what cause the stress.
Dancer 33	<u>releasing stress/anxiety</u>
Dancer 35	I do, <u>every style makes me feel different</u> . I'm definitely more comfortable in specific styles. However, I have clear examples of styles I didn't like in the past helping me in my favorite styles. I now do my best regardless of my feelings for the style.
Dancer 35	VAPA made it very clear that if I was not <u>successful in my academic classes</u> my dance classes would be affected negatively. Because big performances happened at least twice a year, I always did my best when it came to balancing good grades in all my classes. Overall, a passion to perform, greatly increased my time management skills, which I'm still thankful for today.
Dancer 36	Know that I had to do extra rehearsals after school did give me a less time to do my homework at home, so I had to really try my hardest to get my homework done. So, I can continue to perform Nutcracker and <u>maintain my GPA</u> .
Dancer 4	It's a really <u>great feeling</u> to be a part of something so big and beautiful
Dancer 4	I think it's so amazing that I am able to receive a <u>free arts education</u> . That's why I originally came to this school because dance classes outside of school get really expensive. I love my school, arts classes, and teachers :)
Dancer 4	It allowed me the <u>opportunity</u> to practice having dance rehearsal while also having to keep up with homework
Dancer 5	Not as important because I'm not planning to attend an arts school when I graduate but it is fun to <u>distract</u> myself with.
Dancer 5	Before taking class, I wouldn't want to get up and feel like I don't want to get up and go but the after feeling of class makes my bones and muscles tired and <u>feel great</u> .
Dancer 5	I feel <u>alive</u> , I may be a little sleepy but doing warmups and feeling my bones crack is an amazing feeling.
Dancer 5	I want to attend the military and those <u>muscles</u> in important area will be a great help by gaining more muscle as I progress from it.
Dancer 5	Gaining arm strengths with holding port the bra and leg strength by different warm up <u>exercises that will help me</u> for military training in the future.

Table D13 continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 5	The nutcracker gave me motivation to strive for <u>better grades</u> than usual because if I wasn't on top of my schedule or grades, I wouldn't be a part of a great performance. I was also taught it's a privilege to be on stage.
Dancer 6	It is so important to me that people attend the performances because as a performer I work so hard and practice so hard, I put my time on the dance in which I'm going to perform. It would be so disappointing for me to do all that work and have no one show up. no one to see How hard I worked. Learning and perfecting a choreo takes such dedication and so much time out of your life. But the reward for that is <u>watching people smile</u> and taking awe in the work that you've done.
Dancer 6	Weird, crazy, very energetic at times, always coming up with things, always dancing no matter a situation where I am or what time it is. Sometimes weirdly annoying. <u>Always striving</u> no matter what.
Dancer 6	Words that describe me before: Tired, Energetic, Boring, Dull. Words that describe me after: Energetic, ecstatic, happy, eager, good-tired, relaxed, and <u>motivated</u>
Dancer 6	Get <u>experience</u> . Able to show what I can do
Dancer 7	I feel <u>unique</u> , I like when we learn about the history because it helps us understand where the dance originated from.
Dancer 7	Alive, <u>energetic</u> , excited.
Dancer 8	It was really important to me because dance is such a huge part of my life and incorporating that to my daily life <u>helps me keep me motivated and happy</u> .
Dancer 8	A <u>sense of comfort</u>
Dancer 8	I always feel a sense of joy and pride. It's always fun to go to dance class even if I lack energy. It keeps me <u>motivated</u> .
Dancer 9	I feel very comfortable because is one of the most <u>important high schools in performance</u> .
Dancer 8	Like in any class, you have to stay focused and on track. Dance classes are definitely <u>more enjoyable</u> due to being able to move around and not sit in a chair all class. But also, there's a lot of memorizations that goes in both dance and regular classes.
Dancer 8	I'm not quite sure but I was excited to do my best in <u>other classes</u> in order to stay in the show and also made my days more enjoyable

Table D14

Creative Growth Responses

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 1	yes, different songs have me <u>think of different moves</u> that will go to the music
Dancer 1	I feel free and like I can <u>let my emotions free</u> without talking
Dancer 1	In the future I want to be a professional dancer and nutcracker and other dance classes have allowed me to practice technique and facial <u>expressions</u> that will help me going forward in life
Dancer 1	Performance tells a story and <u>facials</u> are very important
Dancer 11	I would say the connections and just the way you <u>express yourself</u> .
Dancer 12	Different styles help me identify with <u>different emotions</u> . One class can trigger happiness, and another can release built up anger or some other feeling.
Dancer 13	Yes, of course, different styles bring out the <u>different emotions</u> they intend to evoke.
Dancer 13	Work ethic and <u>expressiveness</u> in performance.
Dancer 14	I feel like it's important because I feel like I can <u>express myself</u> through dance a lot better than I can through words. I also feel way more comfortable with the people around me. I feel like a family.
Dancer 14	Yes, I do because different styles have <u>different emotions</u> ,
Dancer 14	Yes, I do. I do need to work on my <u>facial expressions</u> .
Dancer 14	A lot of it was learning to have facial <u>expressions</u> .
Dancer 15	It is really important to me because dance is going to be my career and going to class is learning so if I can learn I can <u>grow as a dancer</u> .
Dancer 15	Since I want to be a choreographer and a performer <u>expressing</u> myself and building my confidence is a huge skill I took from my classes.
Dancer 15	It allows me to <u>express my emotions</u> more and be more comfortable around people, as well it allows me to take risks in life.
Dancer 17	Shy, and <u>expressive</u>
Dancer 17	Really fun and <u>expressive</u>
Dancer 17	Be confident and <u>expressive</u>
Dancer 18	I feel happy because it's fun to <u>learn new choreography</u> .
Dancer 2	Before: carefree. After: <u>more passionate</u>
Dancer 19	Even though I enjoy and am good at just being studios, I feel like choosing an art school was the right choice for me, I feel like I can <u>express myself</u> more, which I love.
Dancer 19	When it comes to ballet, I feel like I have to use all my strength in that class. But compared to other classes, I feel I could just be looser and <u>put more of my style into it</u> .
Dancer 2	Flexibility training, <u>Acting</u> training
Dancer 20	I feel free, <u>explorative</u> , and passionate in dance class.
Dancer 21	I feel excited to <u>learn new choreography</u> or step.
Dancer 3	Learning how to <u>act</u>
Dancer 21	Yes!! Every dance style <u>makes me feel different</u> and show different energies.
Dancer 22	Well to be honest it really wasn't a "new" thing since I had already been in music school except VAPA was way bigger and you <u>saw a little of everything</u> .
Dancer 22	Before I felt really stuck emotionally but as I started doing dance, I felt myself <u>releasing</u> all of those <u>emotions</u> .
Dancer 22	Before dance I took 6 years of violin lessons, they're both similar in a way but also very different. In dance you get more freedom to <u>express</u> yourself in however way you'd like however in music there really isn't any "freedom" because if you try to have your "freedom" you would completely mess up the whole piece.

Table D14 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 28	I felt like I had something to offer when I performed for The Nutcracker. It wasn't just about me; it was all types of dancers with different strengths. The first thing I thought when I stepped onto that stage was, "Who can I <u>inspire</u> today?" I felt that I could not let anyone down & I had to lead.
Dancer 3	Be more comfortable with <u>acting</u>
Dancer 30	I do feel different dancing different styles because each style <u>brings out different sides of me</u> . Hip hop brings out the more grimy, more full-out side of me, while ballet brings out the focused and articulate side out. That also goes for jazz, but jazz also makes me feel upbeat and happy.
Dancer 30	I feel free and that I am present. I am in the moment, and it <u>allows me to focus on how my body truly feels</u> when I move in the way that I do and that is a very beautiful thing. When I'm in this headspace, I feel it allows for a better outcome.
Dancer 30	Dance classes and the performances allowed me to <u>express who I am</u> and let out my feelings which also allowed me to have a clear headspace and focus on becoming successful in my education.
Dancer 7	I've always wanted to learn more about dance to <u>experience different styles</u> and I have been given this opportunity.
Dancer 33	Before: shy, anxious, limited. After: <u>creative</u> , passionate, unlimited, patient, persevering
Dancer 31	When I am in a dance class, I am filled with appreciation, joy, passion, and strength that no other sport, activity, practice can't make me feel. It is an art so precious and powerful that <u>allows me to free myself</u> . Everything seems to fall into place when I'm dancing. The feeling is so unique, almost impossible to explain. All I can really say is that nothing has ever made me feel the way I do when I dance.
Dancer 33	Dance has helped me become more successful in not only other subjects at school, but in overall life in general. A lot of the success, inspiration, and motivation also came from my ballet teacher, Ms. Burleigh. She and dance taught me to be myself and to work hard for everything that I want in life. They also taught me how to <u>express myself</u> and release stress in a healthy, positive way. dance also encouraged me to be more successful in other subjects in school because thriving and doing well in classes and grades meant that I could dance and be in the programs with no problem.
Dancer 7	Skills such as technique and <u>musicality</u> .
Dancer 35	Before class I'm usually hyped. I get very excited for class. After class I'm usually inspired. I learn a lot in most of my classes which <u>gives me inspiration</u> to apply it.
Dancer 35	They'd probably describe me as different. When I first started dancing, I wasn't confident, and slightly lazy. I now look at dance in a completely different light. I'm inspired, always training, teaching, etc. Part of this transformation was me finding a love for a style I had no idea existed. Although that change was pretty drastic.
Dancer 35	As of today, I feel I'm great in dance class because I'm <u>inspired</u> . I now have an understanding that I want to dance for as long as possible, so I take each class as an opportunity to grow.
Dancer 35	Dance class has helped me in many ways. I now have a way to <u>express my feelings</u> without words. This saves me a lot of stress as I often choose to dance rather than talk. Dance has given me a reason to do my best in my academics. I want to have a future in dance, so I use that as motivation to get a diploma. Dance helps me be patient in every aspect of my life. Growing in dance is not an easy task, sticking to it without being impatient is necessary in order to see growth. I apply that idea to every party of my life now. I could go on and on, but that's just a few skills I've gained.
Dancer 35	It definitely helped me when it came to being open minded. I was very uncomfortable with performing in tights, and a ballet piece in general. However, having a fun and successful performance left me <u>more open</u> to trying new things.
Dancer 5	I can freely <u>express</u> my way of movement through dance class instead of academic classes. Expressing those movements make me feel free to myself.

Table D14 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 6	A characteristic of dance that make it different from other classes I've taken at school is that, in dance class I am able to move around and not be glued to a desk for hours. I am able to <u>express</u> freely my thoughts and doubts without having to be subjected into explaining.
Dancer 6	Dance has always been effective in my life. Dance class has <u>opened my mind</u> to many possibilities and has made want to learn more. Dancing is about tell a story of some kind. Stories we may learn in different class. Dance exercises my mind and fills it with energy and motivation.
Dancer 9	<u>More expressive.</u>
Dancer 9	We have a choreographer. Do our own <u>choreography</u> .

Table D15

Engagement/Involvement Growth Responses

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 10	It was a super great production put on and <u>everyone felt included</u> which was super great for us, the students.
Dancer 11	I was proud of myself and <u>everyone</u> that was on the stage with me.
Dancer 11	Keeping my <u>connection</u> .
Dancer 12	The Nutcracker was really enjoyable because it made me feel <u>more connected to my peers</u> and it was the highlight of the year.
Dancer 12	It provided a <u>sense of community</u> and belonging.
Dancer 13	Really good its great exercise and super fun because I'm <u>friends with all everyone</u> .
Dancer 14	It was actually really fun and enjoyable to be in it. <u>All the dancers</u> looked really amazing when they danced.
Dancer 14	The Nutcracker is a very happy and <u>cheerful</u> dance and a lot of other dances I did were not.
Dancer 15	I am comfortable talking to new <u>people</u> so that will help me getting to know people so they can connect me to others who can help and support my career.
Dancer 17	It was very helpful, fun and lovely to <u>participate</u> in such as beautiful scenery
Dancer 18	I felt very happy because I was excited to share to the <u>audience</u> the work that I had put in.
Dancer 18	<u>Teamwork</u> comes in handy when assigned group work in future classes and group projects in future jobs.
Dancer 18	The Nutcracker and dance have taught me that <u>teamwork</u> is a very important and valuable skill to have.
Dancer 2	As an actor it made me see how dancers work. I am also a dancer, but it was still interesting to <u>see how others work</u>
Dancer 21	I have to get used to being uncomfortable because in the <u>real world</u> that's the only way you learn.
Dancer 21	I learned how to <u>work in big groups</u> , patience, memorization, thinking under pressure and getting out of my comfort zone.
Dancer 27	<u>Outgoing</u> . Open minded
Dancer 22	Well, something else that I liked was after the show...All of the friends and families taking pictures with their kids and the overall feeling of joy.
Dancer 29	<u>Outgoing</u> . Determined
Dancer 22	I felt a good overwhelmed if that makes sense. I loved the whole <u>backstage vibe</u> ; I loved the feeling before going on stage. I loved everything it was all worth it.
Dancer 28	I grew up being trained in a private dance studio. I listened to teenagers being accepted in some sort of "dance school." I grew up intending to enroll in the same school. My mom found VAPA, and I applied. Once I was there, every day was a dream. I <u>loved going to school</u> . I admired school since I was in primary school but being in a place where I could learn & dance (FOR FREE) was spectacular.
Dancer 30	I felt it was important to me to attend a performing arts high school because it would take me out of my comfort zone considering I was a shy person growing up. It made me <u>more social</u> in a sense and I finally felt like I could just talk to people without being nervous.
Dancer 30	Being an alumnus, my skills have helped me to excel in my professional career as a dancer. I have dwelled more into these skills since leaving high school however high school did first make me aware. Having been in a music video and a stage performance for Jimmy Fallon I had to have stage presence and etiquette throughout the whole experience. Conserving our energy while dancing full out for almost five minutes straight was very important for us too. I feel as though these qualities also tie into professionalism and being able to deliver a great performance for an audience. <u>Professionalism</u> creates trust within the people you are associated with through dance and that will allow you to become more successful.

Table D15 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 30	A handful of skills I learned throughout dance class and the Nutcracker would be dynamics and the different kinds of dynamics, learning how to conserve our energy as a dancer, what if truly means to have stage etiquette, stage presence, and <u>professionalism</u> .
Dancer 31	Ballet and The Nutcracker are something special. I know that I struggled immensely with this style and this class, but I learned to appreciate every aspect of it. It's beauty, technique, and ability to strengthen a dancer is remarkable. Therefore, many dance teachers and dance classes incorporate ballet. Ballet is used in almost every style: in small or large gestures or quantities. Ballet has been infused with different styles in different ways and only continues to flourish from its modern form. The Nutcracker also continues to expand and share a similar storyline that people enjoy. It is something that people eagerly wait to see and be a part of. It has become an important factor of the <u>holiday season</u> and dance careers for many dancers. It brings joy and admiration to the viewer, performer, and instructors.
Dancer 33	When I performed The Nutcracker, I felt so happy and felt like I was in a whole other world when I was performing on stage. I felt free and felt very elegant when I was performing on stage. Performing The Nutcracker also helped me feel a sense of <u>inclusion</u> among everyone.
Dancer 33	I haven't been in a dance class for a long time but when I am, I feel free, happy, calm, <u>expressive</u> , and able to relieve my stress and anxieties.
Dancer 35	VAPA was great because the <u>teacher was great</u> . When I went it was full of passionate teachers who had their student's growth in mind each class. I can't thank them enough for helping me fall in love with dance. So, if there's anyone to give credit too, it's the teachers.
Dancer 4	It was a really nice experience and I felt so <u>glad to be a part of my schools' performance</u> . Since I was new to the school and came into the semester late, I was so glad to receive a last-minute roll a day before the show.
Dancer 4	I think it shows how many job opportunities there is in the arts industry and <u>teamwork</u> is a crucial skill for the work environment
Dancer 7	It feels like a rush of excitement, it's lovely to see everyone get <u>comfortable around each other</u> .
Dancer 4	I think <u>teamwork</u> is the main skill we learn because of how many people go into the production. From dancers to tech to teachers and costume makers. Everyone's role is important
Dancer 4	Nutcracker is great because it's all the technique and everything you learn from class, combined with a performance opportunity and <u>Christmas spirit</u>
Dancer 5	The same, they're still <u>proud they see me in dance</u> , running long distance, and commuting to outside programs.
Dancer 5	Amazing, it was great <u>performing on stage</u> and seeing different costumes. My first time and it was like a magical dream.
Dancer 6	I felt nervous but overall, I was ecstatic. It's a very indescribable feeling. To be able to dance and enjoy having light on me when I dance is amazing. I'm glad I got an opportunity to get experience on stage and performing. It's one thing I never thought I would be able to do but fortunately I did. The adrenaline rush you get when you're moving back and forth between Late rehearsals and early rehearsals and costume changes and doing makeup and getting into your spots before a call is amazing. And mainly being in such a <u>Christmas spirit</u> the one thing that causes so much joy to people. Looking around the set and seeing all the decorations and colorful stuff. Having to wear such colorful and fun costumes, dancing to wonderful joyous music is life changing.
Dancer 6	It all depends on the <u>mood of the atmosphere in the class</u> . Some Days the classes are long and exhausting but other times it is very exciting and buzzing with fun. But overall, I am just so happy to be able to dance and learn so many things. I feel like it is the one place I could truly be myself without having to be judged on my moves because we all have different styles and different ways we dance.

Table D15 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 6	I see myself using the skills almost every time I decide to dance in front of a person. The <u>Team</u> Mentality skills are used always when I have projects in another class or when I'm working with people. The skill that I learned I am open to people's suggestions and ideas on how to make something better. Problem solving is one of the most effective skills someone could learn and use. Nurse tuition I'm stuck in or I'm going to be stuck in problem-solving will be easy and it will be hard at times, but it won't be impossible.
Dancer 7	I can help when <u>people</u> appear to not look sturdy enough reminding them of tiny details to tweak.
Dancer 8	Some skills are memorizing, coordination, staying focus, <u>teamwork</u> mentality, and persistence.
Dancer 7	It definitely allows me to be able to have a way to be free even if we have choreography. It is still so much fun to be around fellow <u>friends</u> as we talk about how the practice went and talk about how excited we are as the show day gets near.
Dancer 8	I really enjoyed my scene (the party scene). It was fun to dance too, and I <u>felt a rush of excitement on the stage</u> . Even if my legs go numb at one point from sitting on stage, it was all part of the experience. I was really excited to do it again this year and was really looking forward to it.

Table D16

Personal Growth Responses

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 1	I feel well for me at least is very important because I know how to <u>manage my everyday life</u> and my dance life and how to make Time for both to be good in both aspects
Dancer 1	very willing to know things I didn't and <u>eager to learn new things</u>
Dancer 1	I felt good that I had the <u>confidence</u> to do it and after I got off stage, I felt really good about my performance
Dancer 1	yes, most definitely I see myself using those <u>skills</u>
Dancer 1	<u>time management</u> and being attentive is what is very similar to classes
Dancer 1	dance in general has pushed me to become way more organized and <u>manage time</u> very well than how I used to
Dancer 10	I think that it is very important attending a performing arts dance school because it is a very <u>unique experience</u> . I am able to do something I like in school and others aren't, so I find that very important different for me.
Dancer 10	They would describe me as a <u>confident</u> person.
Dancer 10	Shy, Open, <u>Confident</u> .
Dancer 10	I will definitely use these skills in the future. I think a big one for me was <u>stamina</u> because that is something I can use in dance and in life.
Dancer 10	<u>Posture, Flexibility, Strength, Stamina</u>
Dancer 10	My growth in <u>confidence</u> was something that The Nutcracker helped with.
Dancer 12	Attending a performing arts school is important to me because it gives me a healthy balance. It's important to have access to a <u>mental/emotional release</u> . It lifts your spirits and stimulates your brain. I remove clutter from my mind when I dance, which increases my academic performance and strengthens my mental health.
Dancer 12	Before class, I'm tired or anxious. After class, <u>I'm relieved</u> or satisfied.
Dancer 12	I feel relieved and <u>empowered</u> .
Dancer 12	I can use self-discipline and perseverance to give my best and <u>work to my full potential</u> in future jobs or opportunities.
Dancer 12	I learn <u>self-discipline</u> and perseverance.
Dancer 12	<u>Open mindedness</u> in dance is similar to other classes in school because it allows me to get the best possible results from a wider range of options.
Dancer 15	Most things can be new to me so yes, I feel different but it's a good different because that means I get to learn a new style which <u>I can progress</u> from.
Dancer 16	I felt, but insecure of me but now I <u>feel sure of myself</u> and my body
Dancer 16	It has helped me <u>do better emotionally and physically</u>
Dancer 17	Be more <u>confident</u> and try more
Dancer 17	Be <u>secure</u> of myself
Dancer 18	They'll describe as a <u>happy person now</u> .
Dancer 19	My mom said I seem <u>more confident</u> when it comes to dancing.
Dancer 19	I was definitely less experienced in ballet before the class, and now I am <u>more confident</u> when it comes to performing.
Dancer 19	Using my <u>balance</u> , it is something that I have to use for every class. So having to preform, if reminded me that I can balance myself to achieve the steps I need.
Dancer 19	Being/ using my <u>confidence</u> is one major similarity I have noticed I used along with other dance classes.
Dancer 19	Focusing. Using my <u>potential</u> .
Dancer 19	With <u>focusing</u> on the nutcracker, it made me realize the dedication I had for things, so I just put that towards school.

Table D16 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 2	More outgoing and comfortable, more outspoken, more developed, more <u>confident</u>
Dancer 20	They would describe me that <u>I have grown</u> so much I dance and from performances.
Dancer 20	Being responsible and <u>time management</u> . Those skills were so essential in performing the Nutcracker because I am responsible for learning and practicing my choreography on my own, no one is going to tell me I have to so I must do that in the future and it's a great practice to start young. Time management is something important to the future that I learned and applied in the Nutcracker because I had to be wise with my schoolwork and practicing my movement. I kept a planner handy to remind me of what time is more convenient to do my work, dance, and be my own teenage self.
Dancer 20	<u>Discipline</u> , passion, determination, and PRACTICE. These characteristics are essential to both school and dance in order to succeed, grow/get better in the skill, and be responsible.
Dancer 21	I feel better about myself and it's so fun! I feel <u>Confidence</u> , happiness, and excitement.
Dancer 22	I feel like everyone has different opinions on me for example to my mom I am very playful and childish but also very mature. To my friends they would describe me as the <u>adventurous</u> one in the group but also very serious in some way and well to my teachers I'm not quite sure.
Dancer 22	<u>Confidence</u> is a real skill to develop, without confidence you feel less and don't value yourself
Dancer 22	I gained <u>confidence</u> . Entering dance having no experience in dance really made me feel less than the other who had no trouble dancing in class.
Dancer 22	It really helped me become <u>confident</u> and see another side of myself.
Dancer 27	It was where I was able to find what <u>makes me happy</u> . As well experience what an actual dance class feels like because where I grew up you don't get those chance and opportunities.
Dancer 27	Shy, <u>Evolved</u>
Dancer 27	It was one of the <u>best experiences</u> and I'll carry it in my heart forever because I was able to work aside one of the best dance teachers I know. Who dedicates everything she has into that production. As wellbeing own the helpers and learning choreography and teaching it was the best.
Dancer 27	I learned that life moves fast and at time you just need to go with it. As well as being <u>mindful</u> of what you're doing
Dancer 27	Time passed by really fast getting ready, so that was difference I <u>experienced</u> .
Dancer 27	I was one of MS. Burleigh's helpers, so I was able to help with teaching and coordinating while still doing class work. I learned how to <u>multitask</u> .
Dancer 28	My parents would describe me as self-motivated. A little concerned with my health habits, but as long as they see me eat, they know I am <u>taking care of my inner well-being</u> .
Dancer 28	Nervous, focused, stiff, determined. Loose, <u>confident</u> , professional, focused.
Dancer 28	I feel focused. Nobody to compete with & no one to compare myself to. I am focused on how I can push myself a certain way in each class. What can I do today that will help me <u>improve</u> ? Being in a dance class, feels professional. Any class is an opportunity to meet someone new & learn about something you had never done before. Walking into and being present in a dance class feels different that walking into a classroom or into a restaurant. You are there to listen, absorb & move!
Dancer 28	I do not have to look a certain way to seem healthy. It is merely how I feel & how I will continue to <u>improve my physical and internal health</u> .
Dancer 28	I was a lead role, Clara, of the 2018 Nutcracker performance. What I realized then-to-now, was I could not slack off. I had a partner that had to lift me & was providing the same intention and support to make this an unforgettable role. What I mean by that was, I should have eaten better, stretched more & kept my body in tune with a ballet performance. Two years have passed, and I frequently look back at the time I was a senior in high school performing for one of the last times on that stage. In present day, I now have a better connection and relationship with exercise and food intake. No distractions & focusing on my internal health. Throughout my years of dancing, I have improved my idea of "health." The skill that I have undertook is, keep my body <u>healthy</u> right now & I shall not have health consequences later on in life.

Table D16 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 29	I feel ok, <u>good experience</u>
Dancer 29	Yes, if they are the ones, I'm comfortable with I am <u>less shy</u> if they aren't I am very shy
Dancer 29	<u>Discipline</u> , Communication
Dancer 29	You feel more <u>responsibility</u> for what you are doing
Dancer 29	It helped me to be more dedicated to what I am doing and to be more <u>confident</u>
Dancer 29	<u>Talented</u> and determined before and after
Dancer 3	Sad and <u>happy</u>
Dancer 3	Be stricter with my <u>body</u>
Dancer 30	I feel they would describe me to be determined, <u>ambitious</u> , and goal oriented.
Dancer 30	Before taking dance class, I would always be excited and happy because I'm getting the opportunity to <u>better myself</u> in a different light. After class, depending on the situation, I would either be happy or frustrated but I never let those feelings determined whether I was proud of myself or not. I was always proud because in some way, shape, or form I learned something new that day.
Dancer 30	Being in a performing arts high school was very important for me considering what I wanted to do as a career which is dance. Being surrounded by people who also have the same drive and ambition was very important to me too because the people around me pushed each other to become better at what we did. We loved what we did, and we didn't let anybody stop us from achieving our dreams. I feel that was the energy throughout the school because we were there for a reason and that was to become <u>more well-rounded</u> in what we loved.
Dancer 30	I felt great performing it because it was something different than what I'm used to. I was happy performing because it is what I love to do, and it just made a <u>more well-rounded</u> dancer after that experience.
Dancer 31	<u>physical and mental control</u>
Dancer 33	I feel it's very important to attend a performing arts dance school because it gives many kids opportunities that they would not have gotten anywhere else. It also gives kids the chance to learn new things that they would not have had learned if they attended a regular school. Attending performing arts schools opens and offers so many <u>life-changing</u> opportunities that kids would not have gotten or heard of if they attended a regular school with no performing arts.
Dancer 33	<u>Independent, positive</u> , strong, energetic, and hardworking.
Dancer 33	The skills above have helped me because they made me realize that whatever I put my mind to, I can do. They made me realize that I am a lot stronger than I think I am. These skills also taught me to be <u>more understanding</u> with myself and with others, but to most of all be patient with myself. These skills also helped me to push myself, even during the times that I feel like I can't keep pushing. Lastly, they have helped and inspired me to keep working hard for whatever I want to achieve in my life.
Dancer 33	Attending a performing arts school actually helped to shape the <u>person that I am today</u> . It allowed me to learn many different things, artistry, and different cultures, and helped me learn to get along with all different types of people.
Dancer 33	Work hard and persevere, no matter how many times it takes to get it right. Be patient with yourself. Take the time to practice until you get it. You have to work and <u>grow</u> through the pain in order to get to where you want/need to be
Dancer 4	I think I have definitely grown as a dancer and person in the sense of having <u>more confidence</u>
Dancer 35	I give my school credit for helping me find my love for dance. I fell in love with dance my junior year and it <u>changed my life</u> . If any other kid has the chance to experience this change, I'd say it's absolutely necessary!
Dancer 35	I felt uncomfortable, I felt nervous, I felt unprepared. Although I was an insecure sophomore. Nonetheless that performance was a pivotal step in my love for dance. I had to experience dance at its scariest to understand <u>how much I had to grow</u> .

Table D16 Continued

Participant	Participant's Response
Dancer 35	I already use them every day. I dance every week multiple times as <u>a way to grow</u> and stay sane. I'm a full-time college student pushing through because of dance. I'm patient with myself, my family, friends, etc. because I know I need to be. I'm constantly using the skills I've gained.
Dancer 35	Dance will always be different as I'm exerting my energy constantly. You have to be in shape physically or you will struggle. However similar to other classes you also have to <u>focus mentally</u> . VAPA gave us many challenges that revolves around memorization, such as choreography or skills test. This could easily be compared to memorizing English definitions or math formulas.
Dancer 4	Before I am motivated and energized and after I am tired but <u>accomplished</u> . I am still energized but in a new way
Dancer 4	I feel happy and ready to learn and <u>improve</u> . Even if it's only a little bit each time I'm in class
Dancer 6	Yes, most definitely I have my own style in which I dance, I have styles I'm good at and others in where I need improvement. dancing a style that I'm not really good at is very challenging. You get correction, criticism, and advice sometimes you don't ask but you still receive. Not knowing what you're doing but still doing it very different and uncomfortable a Time, but we have to keep going if you want to <u>succeed</u> .
Dancer 6	If I hadn't done the Nutcracker, if I hadn't performed in the Nutcracker, I don't think I would be the person I am today. Having that experience <u>made me who I am</u> . It's a wonderful thing to be able to perform art in school. It gives a chance to others who aren't able to do stuff like that out of school. It also gives students a way to express who they truly are and to find who they want to be and to know where they're going. It's just a way to know exactly what you want to know.
Dancer 7	I think they would say <u>I've changed</u> from freshmen year to now.
Dancer 7	Before dance class I don't have as much energy as I normally would depending on the day. After dance class I feel <u>more awake</u> and ready to face any challenges.
Dancer 8	People would describe me as energetic, shy, but also <u>confident</u> .
Dancer 8	Yes, I feel different dancing different styles. Either I feel <u>confident</u> in one style than another or I enjoy a certain style more than another.
Dancer 8	These <u>skills</u> are always used in any learning setting whether it's school, dance, sports, etc. these skills come in handy.
Dancer 9	Coordination. <u>Confidence</u> .
Dancer 9	Have more <u>confidence</u> . Be more expressive.
Dancer 9	Because you can become <u>more</u> comfortable and <u>responsible</u> .