

Fairview Elementary

The Dancing Classroom was introduced to Fairview Elementary School in February 2010. None of us really knew what to expect but we went into it with enthusiasm and a lot of curiosity. "How are we going to ever learn how to *tango*?" The students had some trepidation and anticipation but after hearing the Latin rhythms and the smoothness of the Foxtrot our anxiety soon melted away.

Looking into their partner's eyes wasn't so difficult once the students got use to touching hands (pancakes) with their dance partner. The boys were a little more hesitant to dance but I stood in amazement when Angela asked the students for a volunteer and the majority of the boys (as well as the girls) actually raised their hands! It was an obvious example that the students' self confidence was increasing!

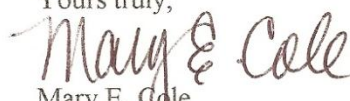
Angela was adamant about demonstrating respect to the students. She always referred to the kids as ladies and gentlemen. I noticed how some of the boys' shoulders went back and how the girls' stood a little taller when they were called a lady or a gentleman. When there was a little too much chatter among the students it was usually because they were discussing a particular dance move and Angela did a great job in getting them back to attention.

The tango and the swing were the students' favorite dances. It was so much fun to see the dramatic faces during the tango and the quick steps and smiles during the swing! You could see the pride in their faces as they performed the "corte" perfectly. The kids couldn't help but start moving when they heard "rock around the clock!"

Our culminating event was a huge success! I was so impressed with the dressy flair that the girls brought to the program and the pressed shirts of the boys made them look like fine gentlemen. They did a wonderful job dancing for their teachers and parents. I don't think their parents really understood what exactly they were in for. When they witnessed the fruit of their labor it blew them away! Our special guests enjoyed it too.

I hope we are able to do this again in the coming years. I truly enjoyed learning the dances myself. To feel the kids' enthusiastic attitudes about practicing and witness their progression has really brought a smile of pride to my face! It is obvious that they have enjoyed it! That to me is success.

In conclusion the Dancing Classroom provided the students with an atmosphere of elegance, honor and respect and self confidence. I believe this experience has enriched their lives and sparked an interest in ballroom dancing. The ten weeks of practice was a fun experience that I hope to incorporate in the coming years. I thank all that made The Dancing Classroom available to our public school students!

Yours truly,

Mary E. Cole