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## "Proventing" Intimate Partner Violence-Related Attitudes Through Arts-Based Peace Education: A Sequential Explanatory Study of Dancing Classrooms Alumni

Cody Wehlan

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“Proventing” Intimate Partner Violence-Related Attitudes through Arts-based Peace Education:

A Sequential Explanatory Study of *Dancing Classrooms* Alumni

A Doctoral Dissertation

Presented to

The School of International Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development

Norman J. Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in International Conflict Management

by

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## Abstract

Research links intimate partner violence (IPV) to socialized, and often gendered, *power-over* attitudes that view abuse, control, and physical violence against, or by, an intimate partner as acceptable and appropriate in various contexts. While many IPV prevention programs emphasize education for reducing intimate partner violence-related attitudes (IPVA), most programs respond after violence has occurred and are often ineffective. Presenting an innovative form of proactive prevention, or “provention”, this dissertation combines arts-based peace education, youth IPV prevention, and intergroup contact theory (ICT) to outline how youth-focused social dance may effectively prevent IPVA risk factors by teaching young people collaborative, *power-with* social skills in a safe and structured environment. This approach is demonstrated by examining how *Dancing Classrooms*, a New York based social dance program, affects the development of social and emotional learning (SEL) skills and IPVA risk factors through its 10-week school-based program. Further, ICT is applied to *Dancing Classrooms*’ pedagogy, the *Dulaine Method*, to assess how its design contributes to positive relationship building among participants.

Combining analyses of 275 alumni survey responses with interviews and focus groups including eight alumni, seven Teaching Artists, and four Executive Program Directors, this mixed methods study finds *Dancing Classrooms* effectively teaches prosocial, *power-with* behaviors and promotes positive relationships among participants. Findings reveal most alumni perceive *Dancing Classrooms* positively affected their SEL skills, with higher SEL scoring significantly predicting lower physical violence-related IPVA. Results also show the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy fulfills all five ICT conditions for positive relationship building, with emphasis on the positive support of Teaching Artists and positive peer interactions.

This study contributes to peace education and IPV research by demonstrating how teaching social dance within ICT conditions can subvert harmful interpersonal attitudes by promoting positive social skills and relationships. Future interdisciplinary research is needed to understand how and when arts-based peace education, including but not limited to social dance, may effectively prevent violence by teaching collaborative, *power-with* social skills and promoting positive, interpersonal relationships.

### **Key Words**

Arts-based Peace Education, Intimate Partner Violence, IPV Prevention, Social and Emotional Learning, Dancing Classrooms, Intergroup Contact Theory, Dance

## Acknowledgements

Completing my dissertation would not have been possible without the patience, support, and encouragement of many individuals, personally and professionally. I began my dissertation before the COVID-19 pandemic and feel grateful to be on the other side and thriving because of those who have supported me along the way.

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been a genuine pleasure to work alongside everyone at *Dancing Classrooms* and I'm looking forward to future collaborations.

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## List of Abbreviations

CE	Culminating Event
DC	Dancing Classrooms
GBV	Gender-based Violence
ICT	Intergroup Contact Theory
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IPVA	Intimate Partner Violence Attitudes
IPVAS	Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
(IP)VAW	(Intimate Partner) Violence Against Women

## Statement of Reflexivity

Instead of omitting my identity to imply “neutrality and objectivity” (Smith 2012, 58) of my research findings, it is important to note my positionality as the researcher and to acknowledge how I may bring my own conscious and subconscious bias into this study. I acknowledge research is “an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (Smith 2012, 5) and my efforts are no exception. Therefore, to create “an open and honest narrative” (Creswell 2009, 192) about why I chose this research, I’ll briefly introduce myself.

I am a 34-year-old white, cisgender, heterosexual male living in Georgia, USA. In Maryland, USA, where I was born and raised, I enjoyed over a decade dancing at my mother’s dance studio where I learned many partner dances and performed frequently, both competitively and non-competitively. I stepped away from the studio scene when I went to college to pursue my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution at Salisbury University. During that time, I began noticing how the *power-with* attitudes promoted by Peace Studies resonated with me strongly; however, I only realized in my doctoral program that I cultivated many of those values through my dancing experiences in youth.

My awareness and appreciation for dance as a form of arts-based peace education grew and inspired me to research how this may happen for others. In doing so, I’ve discovered a passion for sharing movement, expression, and connection in a way that aligns with peace education for promoting safer, happier relationships and communities. At the same time, I acknowledge how my experiences make me impartial to arts-based peace education and that I’m very privileged to have had open access to dance at an early age. Dance, like many extracurricular activities, is often a significant investment of money and time for families to



ensure their children can attend multiple weekly sessions and participate in recitals. Even more so if they're actively competing.

Acknowledging these obstacles were non-existent to me since I was the director's son, I feel inspired to "pay it forward" by supporting community dance organizations and, one day, opening a community dance program myself to offer people accessible opportunities to move, experience, and connect with dance. For almost thirty years, *Dancing Classrooms* has been offering social dance education at no cost to students to benefit their learning and social skills, which reflects my values and inspired me to conduct research on the benefits of the program. While I personally admire the work of *Dancing Classrooms*, I remain committed to my ethical standards as a researcher in analyzing and reporting the findings of the study. This mixed methods study attempts to mitigate my "voice" as the researcher by elevating the voices of alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive Program Directors to tell their stories of the program. Through statistical analyses and structural coding, I report the trends and themes of their collective experiences to convey the perceived impact and benefit of the program in the context of improving interpersonal behaviors with intimate partners. With that said, you will see glimpses of me throughout this study. This research has been an enjoyable journey which I'm excited to share.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For a moment, I invite you to imagine the following scene:

*Imagine a picturesque suburban neighborhood on a calm Spring evening. The sky is fading into twilight blues as streetlamps awaken to greet the oncoming night. The lights of nearby homes cast golden rays into vibrant green yards that separate the homes and embroider the vacant street and driveway. In one of the driveways, two children are playing football (or soccer in the U.S.). The quiet evening air slowly becomes filled with a faded cacophony of cheers and raucous protests from the many homes watching the 2022 World Cup. As your gaze drifts across the homes, you begin noticing several homes have white flags fastened to them. The white flags bear a singular, symmetrical red cross, somewhat like the red cross on the flag of England. Curiosity and confusion build as you notice more and more of these flags on the various homes. Then, your eyes land upon a single, grandiose flag covering half of the front of a nearby house with large, black lettering added to it: “He’s Coming Home.” The scene fades to black. White words contrast the black void: “1.6 million women experiencing domestic abuse need your support too.” End scene.*

This startling narrative was depicted in the UK Women’s Aid 2022 World Cup commercial “He’s Coming Home” to raise awareness about domestic violence that occurs during the 2022 World Cup season. Their YouTube caption says, “For many women, it is a time of fear, where existing domestic violence can increase. While football does not cause domestic abuse, existing abuse can intensify around key tournaments” (Women’s Aid 2022), indicating that heightened emotions during sports games may aggravate underlying risk factors for domestic violence.

However, this presents the question: Are people only abusive to their partners when their sports

team does not win? Likely not. Domestic violence is a form of intimate partner violence (IPV) which includes “physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partners (i.e., spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, or ongoing sexual partner)” (Breiding et al 2015). Research links the prevalence of IPV to attitudes which accept having *power-over* a partner through physical, emotional, or psychological violence. Therefore, while awareness campaigns like UK Women’s Aid rightfully acknowledge the violence that increases during sports seasons, the greater issue lies in understanding how intimate partner violence-related attitudes (IPVA) are cultivated and, more importantly, how can IPVA be transformed into positive and non-violent interpersonal attitudes? This dissertation addresses this dilemma by presenting an innovative approach for positively transforming IPVA into collaborative, *power-with* attitudes through Arts-based peace education and, more specifically, social dance.

### **Significance of Research**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization estimated 641-753 million partnered women will experience IPV at least once in their lifetime (WHO 2021); however, within the first months of the COVID-19 lockdowns a “shadow pandemic” (UN Women 2021) emerged with domestic violence hotline activity increased by 25-30% (Mlambo-Ngcuka 2020). While this emphasis on violence against women (VAW) is necessary, IPV inclusively acknowledges violence experienced by men and in non-heterosexual relationships (Machado et al. 2017; Bermea, Van Eeden-Moorefield, and Khaw 2018; Messinger 2011, 2017) These statistics demonstrate the dire need for proactive prevention (or “provention”) initiatives promoting safer relationships.

This study explores IPV prevention based on scholarship identifying patriarchal narratives of *masculine* dominance and *feminine* submission that socialize violent, *power-over* relationships between partners (French 1985; Mead 1935; Ruddick 1989). Patriarchal narratives attribute “strength”, “power”, and “control” to the *masculine* as praiseworthy whereas the *feminine* is attributed emotion, kindness, and obedience. While these gendered behaviors are often normatively allocated to men and women respectively, research shows patriarchal *masculine* behaviors of dominance are not biologically determined and can be expressed by anyone regardless of gender identity (Foshee et al. 1999; Butler 2004; Próspero 2006). This indicates that *power-over* relationships based on dominance are not exclusively a male-perpetrator issue, but an issue for everyone to understand and change. To avert dominance-based relationships, a transformative shift is needed from *power-over* attitudes (i.e., domination) towards *power-with* attitudes (i.e., collaboration).

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) notes active prevention of IPV should focus on several key protective factors: (1) *emotional health and connectedness*, (2) *empathy and concern for how one’s actions affect others*, (3) *strong social support networks*, and (4) *stable, positive relationships with others*” (CDC n.d.). Some researchers report that these factors can be achieved through teaching and applying social and emotional learning (SEL) skills (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) in public education settings (Ball 2013; DeGue et al. 2014). Empowering youth development of prosocial, *power-with* behaviors (i.e., *power-with*) is valuable because many prevention measures assess and address IPV in a reactive capacity that are often ineffective (Dutton 2006). This

suggests that active prevention (aka “provention”) may be best achieved by innovatively teaching the desired *power-with* behaviors rather than trying to solely discourage *power-over* behaviors.

Arts-based peace education research supports dance as an innovative form of education encouraging embodiment of prosocial *power-with* skills such as communication, empathy, and collaboration (Coleman et al. 2014; Wiltermuth and Health 2009). While arts-based peace education is often influenced by Eurocentric framing of performance which categorize what dance is, or is not, research generally supports shared movement with others promoted a “connected knowing” (Boulding 1988) that builds empathy, connection, and trust. Additionally, dance cultivates non-verbal communication through self-expression and awareness of others’ somatic expressions, enhancing interconnectedness and empathy (Gallese 2003). Expectedly, SEL research identifies dance as an effective pedagogical tool for developing SEL skills (Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles 2000; Hafeli and Horowitz 2017; Rajan and Aker 2020). While few studies research connections between the movement arts and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, none to date have examined IPVA provention through social dance. This study addresses this gap by examining *Dancing Classrooms* as an example of arts-based IPV provention program.

Founded in 1994 by Pierre Dulaine, *Dancing Classrooms* is a NYC-based non-profit organization specializing in youth-based arts enrichment and social development through social partner dancing. Using the trademark *Dulaine Method* of instruction, the program teaches youth the movements and cultural heritage of five dance styles: Merengue, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, and

Swing (Dulaine 2016). While teaching these styles of dance, which are influenced by Western influences of ballroom etiquette, *Dancing Classrooms* acknowledges that dances take on many forms and styles, with no one style being “correct.” As of early 2023, *Dancing Classrooms* programs instructed over 650,000 children worldwide (Dancing Classrooms [DC] (a)), and, prior to COVID-19, instructed 50,000 children annually in 35 cities across 5 countries (Dulaine 2016, 231). This study combines previous research with CDC protective factors to explore how *Dancing Classrooms* may similarly promote prosocial *power-with* attitudes. Additionally, this study theoretically assesses *Dancing Classrooms* using Intergroup Contact Theory to strengthen findings by exploring “how” positive interpersonal connections among participants may form.

### **Research Questions**

Examining how arts-based peace education, specifically social dance, may effectively address IPVA by developing *power-with* social skills, this dissertation is guided by two core questions:

- Does arts-based peace education strengthen social skills?
- Does arts-based peace education reduce IPVA?

Addressing these questions within the scope of *Dancing Classrooms*, I examine how alumni of *Dancing Classrooms* perceive their experience influenced their SEL skills and IPVA.

Observations of Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors are also analyzed to complement alumni responses, as well as to theoretically frame *Dancing Classrooms* with Intergroup Contact Theory conditions. To better understand how *Dancing Classrooms* may prevent IPVA through positive interpersonal contact and SEL development, this dissertation adapts the core research questions into the following queries for *Dancing Classrooms*:

- *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted the development of their SEL skills?*
- *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted their IPV-related attitudes?*

Additionally, the following hypotheses are tested:

H1: Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive high impact on SEL skill-development.

- Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *self-awareness* skills.
- Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *self-management* skills.
- Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *social awareness* skills.
- Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *relationship* skills.
- Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *responsible decision-making* skills.

H2: Individuals with high SEL skills will report low IPV-related attitudes.

- Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *abuse-related* attitudes.
- Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *control-related* attitudes.
- Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *violence-related* attitudes.

## **Research Procedures**

Following a sequential explanatory design involving an initial quantitative data collection phase (electronic surveys) followed by qualitative data collection (interviews and focus groups), this

research first analyzes 275 alumni surveys using SPSS software to test hypotheses and examine connections between SEL and IPV variables and form qualitative data collection protocols. Data from interviews and focus groups including eight alumni, seven Teaching Artists, and four Executive/Program Directors is analyzed with NVivo software and participant responses are structurally coded based on prevalence of SEL, IPV, and ICT-related language. Triangulation of findings are discussed in Chapter 9.

### **Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation is arranged into nine chapters, which collectively frame *Dancing Classrooms* programming as an arts-based IPV prevention program. Chapter 2 outlines *Dancing Classrooms* as a case study for arts-based peace education and IPV prevention. *Dancing Classrooms'* history and pedagogical design, the *Dulaine* Method, is discussed and established literature of *Dancing Classrooms* is noted for later comparison and analysis in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 summarizes core concepts of peace, conflict, and violence within Peace Studies. The chapter also discusses how peace education can actively prevent (or “provent”) violence, with emphasis on arts-based approaches for peace education. Literature on prosocial, *power-with* behaviors is also discussed in connection with IPVA and SEL skills.

Chapter 4 examines the history and scope of IPV within the context of GBV literature. This chapter discusses how the inclusive qualities of IPV differ traditional GBV definitions and scales which often overlook violence against men and violence occurring in non-heterosexual relationships. Establishing links between social and emotional learning (SEL), IPV protective



factors, and arts-based peace education, *Dancing Classrooms* is framed as an arts-based IPV prevention program.

Chapter 5 explains the scope of ICT and the five conditions for promoting positive contact and improving relationships. This chapter compares ICT conditions with arts-based peacebuilding scholarship, as well as *Dulaine Method* principles, to demonstrate the positive relationship-building characteristics of *Dancing Classrooms*' design.

Chapter 6 reviews this dissertation's sequential explanatory design and research questions with the context of *Dancing Classrooms*. The chapter outlines key dependent and independent variables, quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures, statistical analyses and structural coding of responses, and limitations future research can account for.

Chapter 7 summarizes collection and analyses of 275 alumni surveys to examine how *Dancing Classrooms* alumni perceived their experience affected their social skills development and their acceptance of IPV attitudes. The chapter highlights findings which support H1 and partially support H2, indicating *Dancing Classrooms* alumni perceive the program positively benefited their social skills and reduced their acceptable of physical violence-related attitudes.

Chapter 8 outlines how connections between *Dancing Classrooms*, social skills, and IPV attitudes are connected based on perceptions of alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors from various *Dancing Classrooms* sites. This chapter outlines interview and focus group protocols and explains structural coding procedures used to analyze responses. The

chapter discusses strong congruence between quantitative and qualitative analyses, further supporting H1 and partially supporting H2.

Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes this study's findings by triangulating results with established literature. This chapter discusses study limitations and implications of findings and provides guidance for future research between arts-based peace education, IPV prevention, and ICT approaches.

## CHAPTER 2: DANCING CLASSROOMS

Quote: “When a human being dances with another human being, you get to know that person in a way that you cannot describe. You get to feel their reaction to your touch, and your impression of them is altered.” ~Pierre Dulaine TedTalk at UCLA Freud Play House, Los Angeles

Building connection through contact and movement is a principal value of the *Dancing Classrooms* message. While contact ranges from physically embracing a partner in dance frame to sharing eye contact from a social distance, depending on comfort of participants, interpersonal interaction and connection is core to *Dancing Classrooms*' vision and impact. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Dancing Classrooms* remained committed to creating spaces of connection and expression by adapting in-person programming into remote sessions and hybrid formats. In 2022, *Dancing Classrooms* began operating in-person again to offer a safe, inclusive space for youth to (re)learn valuable prosocial behaviors that may have diminished during at-home, virtual instruction. While this research exclusively examines pre-pandemic experiences of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors, this study's findings help illustrate how *Dancing Classrooms* presents youth a positive opportunity to bounce back from remote learning by promoting SEL behaviors and preventing IPV-related attitudes through its interactive framework. This chapter explores the history of *Dancing Classrooms* and discusses key features of the program, including collaborative school partnerships, implementing the *Dulaine Method*, delivering Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Education (CRSE), and celebrating student growth. Previous research on *Dancing Classrooms* is then reviewed and implications for *Dancing Classrooms* as a transformative arts-based peace education program are discussed at the end of the chapter in preparation for proceeding chapters on peace education,

intimate-partner violence prevention, social and emotional learning, and intergroup contact theory.

### ***Dancing Classrooms' History***

Started in 1994 by four-time World Ballroom Champion Pierre Dulaine, *Dancing Classrooms* is a non-profit organization specializing in youth-based arts enrichment and social development through social dance in New York City Schools. Originally developed within the American Ballroom Theater Company (ABrT), Pierre Dulaine founded *Dancing Classrooms* with a desire to help “bring back civility between people on a daily basis, and to engage the next generation in a connected, courteous world” (Dulaine 2016, 167). Growing success of the initial *Dancing Classrooms* program (now known as *Dancing Classrooms NYC*) quickly drew (inter)national attention and interest, leading to a franchise-based model whereby community organizations could become official “affiliate sites” to provide *Dancing Classrooms* programming for schools within their designated region. As part of gaining affiliation, community organizations must send personnel to the *Dancing Classrooms* headquarters NYC to be trained as “Teaching Artists” in the trademarked *Dulaine Method* of instructing the program’s five core dance styles: Merengue, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, and Swing (Dulaine 2016). Once Teaching Artists are trained, the affiliate site can form public programming and form partnerships with local school systems, referred to as “residencies” (Dulaine 2016). Global awareness of *Dancing Classrooms’* innovative programming swiftly grew as early successes of the NYC program became memorialized in the movie-documentaries *Mad Hot Ballroom* (2005) and *Take the Lead* (2006), and again later in the 2013 documentary *Dancing in Jaffa* where Dulaine instructed Israeli and Palestinian youth. Today, *Dancing Classrooms* programs has instructed over 650,000 children

worldwide (Dancing Classrooms [DC] (a)), and, prior to COVID-19, instructed 50,000 children annually in 35 cities across 5 countries (Dulaine 2016, 231). While international affiliate sites have ceased operating due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the affiliate network at large remains resilient and thriving in the U.S.

### ***Dancing Classrooms' Framework***

The success of *Dancing Classrooms* lies in its consistency and implementation of Pierre Dulaine's vision back in 1994 to "teach life skills wrapped in social dance" (DC 2021). Social dance, in the context of *Dancing Classrooms*, involves instructing youth in various partnered dance styles, commonly referred to as "ballroom dancing," to promote cultural appreciation and promote positive social skills. To achieve these goals, the following four components collectively contribute to *Dancing Classrooms' Framework*: (1) collaborative school partnerships, (2) implementation of the *Dulaine Method*, (3) delivering Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Education (CRSE), and (4) celebrating student growth. While program details remain *Dancing Classrooms' proprietary knowledge*, sufficient information is publicly available to illustrate these core components. In addition to the 10-week residency program, some *Dancing Classrooms* sites offer extended programming for students after school or on the weekend. For example, *Dancing Classrooms NYC* offers a "Weekend Academy" for students to continue pursuing ballroom dancing (DC n.d.(b)). While this study emphasizes the *Dulaine Method* itself as a theoretical model for arts-based peace education, additional research comparing impact of the 10-week residency and extended programming is needed to fully understand similarities and differences among participant experiences.

## Collaborative School Partnerships

The first component to the *Dancing Classrooms* framework is establishing a residency program, which as mentioned before is a partnership between a *Dancing Classrooms* affiliate site and a school community. Prior to implementation, the *Dancing Classrooms* team meets with classroom teachers to discuss the format of the residency and establish dates for the 10-week, bi-weekly instruction of the students. During these discussions, school and *Dancing Classrooms* members collaboratively modify teaching strategies and language to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for the children in the classroom settings. Prior to beginning the 10-week curriculum, the *Dancing Classrooms* Program Manager and Teaching Artist(s) meet with the participating classrooms to introduce themselves to students and alleviate uncertainty by outlining how students will learn various dance styles and encouraging students it will be a safe and fun experience. Promoting an organized and exciting Day 1 experience, classroom teachers assign students to form one of two groups ahead of time, so students are prepared and confident to hop right into various movement activities. Group formations may be as concentric circles (“inner”/“outer”) or parallel lines. Classroom teachers are guided by *Dancing Classrooms*, and local education policies, to promote a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for students by composing gender-diverse groupings. During the first week of instruction, students are assigned partners (known as “unity” or “escort” partners) for the opening and closing activities of each lesson during the 10-week residency. Outside of opening and closing activities, students interact and change partners throughout the lessons. Social dancing may happen with physical contact or at a social distance (without physical contact but with eye contact), and students may learn one or both roles in a dance (i.e., learning to ‘guide’ or be ‘guided’ with a partner). In the beginning, students are designated to be the “left-footed” partner (formerly referred as the

“leader”) or the “right-footed” partner (formerly referred as the “follower”) for the duration of the 10-week residency so they gain proficiency in one form. Students may shift to the “other foot” if they desire, however, they are expected to retain that role for the 10-week residency as it may introduce partnering challenges down the road since everyone has their paired unity partners already.

By collaboratively curating activities with classroom teachers to meet student needs by adapting activities, *Dancing Classrooms* actively co-establishes a safe, stable, and inclusive space prior to students taking their first dancing steps. This attentive and mindful cultivation of youth experiences demonstrates several of the principles that guide the *Dancing Classrooms* pedagogy – the *Dulaine Method*.

### The *Dulaine Method*

Unsurprisingly, the *Dulaine Method* is the approach named after *Dancing Classrooms*’ founder, Pierre Dulaine. Interestingly, despite founding the program in 1994, the *Dulaine Method* was not codified until 2007. Being that Dulaine personally instructed Teaching Artists, there was not a pedagogical manual or framework necessary beforehand –Dulaine was the manual. However, the growing success of the program raised questions about what the key components of Pierre’s pedagogy were that he imparted to others in his training. Through participant-observations and thematic analysis of core terms and techniques demonstrated by Pierre Dulaine and the Teaching Artists, results show the *Dulaine Method* encompassed six core principles: (1) *Creating a Safe Space*, (2) *Respect and Compassion*, (3) *Being Present*, (4) *Command and Control*, (5) *Language – Body and Verbal*, and (6) *Humor and Joy* (Pierre 2016).

Demonstrated in their use of inclusive language and adapting instruction to meet student needs, *Creating a Safe Space* reflects Teaching Artists' consistency of instruction and continued presence throughout the 10-week residency. While guests in the school community, Teaching Artists show up as another caring, supportive adult in the lives of students, role-modeling and encouraging students to express themselves with others through movement and communication. Teaching Artists also demonstrate the second principle, *Respect and Compassion* with students, through respectful interactions and kindness. In a 1987 interview with *Dance Teacher Now*, Pierre Dulaine expressed dance teachers should be "a guide of the body – not a dictator" (Keremes 1987, 22), revealing Dulaine's *Respect and Compassion* principle years before founding *Dancing Classrooms* in 1994. The third principle, *Being Present*, signifies mindfulness and active engagement with students where they are, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Whether translating movements to be more accessible or acknowledging a student's emotions when feeling uncomfortable or simply having a bad day, Teaching Artists' role-model attentiveness and constructive communication with others to promote a safe, inclusive community built in respect and trust. At face value, *Command and Control* appear questionable terminology outside of the context of *Dancing Classrooms*; however, this fourth principle highlights how Teaching Artists provide structured guidance while promoting students' mastery and confidence in their movements and themselves. The *Control* in this context is self-control of one's inner and outer awareness and movement, which empowers one to have *Command* of oneself which translates into confidence. As noted in later Chapters, this concept may also represent understanding the difference between *power-with* and *power-over* behaviors and attitudes, with the former emphasizing sharing *Control* while maintaining *Command* (and accountability) of one's actions and impact on others. *Language – Body and Verbal*, the fifth



principle, represents the Teaching Artists recognizing how their (non)verbal social cues positively affect students' confidence to participate and express themselves (non)verbally. Last, is the *Humor and Joy* demonstrated by Teaching Artists. This principle embraces the beautifully imperfect nature of being human with humility and humor, which beneficially encourages students to have fun and not be fearful of making mistakes. Collectively, these six principles form the core of the *Dancing Classrooms* experience which are later connected with peace education (Chapter 3), violence prevention principles (Chapter 4), and intergroup contact theory (Chapter 5).

#### Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Education (CRSE)

CRSE is an education policy by New York City's Department of Education requiring public schools to teach cultural histories and historical contexts of content to build awareness and appreciation of all cultures (NYC Department of Education n.d.). *Dancing Classrooms* fulfills this requirement by teaching students the cultural origins and historic representations of dance as they're introducing a new dance style to students. In doing so, *Dancing Classrooms* increases student awareness and appreciation of various cultures, both of their own and of others, which promotes positive interpersonal interactions and relationships. It is significant to note some dance pedagogy scholars define being "culturally responsive" differently, emphasizing that the forms of dance offered to students, along with the way these forms are taught, should be responsive to and reflective of the diversity of cultures in a given student population (McCarthy-Brown 2017). For the purposes of this dissertation, however, CRSE in the context of *Dancing Classrooms* is intended to inform students about root cultures from which *Dancing Classrooms* dances are derived as a way of support cultural diversity. After initially sparking students'

cultural awareness through historical and cultural introductions, Teaching Artists may complement cultural understanding and appreciation with reflection assignments. Instructed dance styles include the merengue, tango, swing, rumba, foxtrot, and waltz, as well as a modified Heel Toe Polka and several Line Dances.

*Dancing Classrooms* also implements CRSE through gender-neutral language. In the original *Dancing Classrooms* curriculum, “ladies and gentlemen” was a common greeting meant to convey respect to students. While this original language was well-intended and reflected the language of professional ballroom cultures, *Dancing Classrooms* transformed their curriculum to continue demonstrating respect in non-gendered ways, such as “dancers” or “dance friends.” Similarly, *Dancing Classrooms* recognized how “leader” and “follower”, traditionally used ballroom dancing terms, potentially reinforced gendered associations of asymmetrical power (DC 2021). Now, *Dancing Classrooms* identifies participant roles through “inner”/“outer” circle groups and “left-footed”/“right-footed” language, demonstrating continued commitment to creating safe, inclusive spaces for student expression and connection. By making these changes, *Dancing Classrooms* subtly addresses gendered dynamics of power without explicitly discussing it with students. Through somatic practice and interchanging of dance roles, participants learn the importance of mutual accountability and respect between roles.

### Celebrating Student Growth

The last component in *Dancing Classrooms*’ framework is the celebration of student growth and success through three features: (1) Student Reflections, (2) the Culminating Event (CE) and (3) the “Colors of the Rainbow” (CR) competition. *Dancing Classrooms* utilizes various reflection techniques with students to aid in connecting dance with academic curriculum and other social

contexts. While specific techniques and methods are proprietary knowledge that this study may not disclose, teaching artists have a diverse array of active learning techniques for promoting student learning. At the end of the 10-week residency, a Culminating Event (CE) is arranged with all students to showcase their skills in front of invited family members, teachers, and students who may participate in the next residency rotation (DC n.d.(c)). Along with debuting the hard work and passion of the dancing students, the CE is intended to be a non-competitive space for recognizing growth, effort, and impact of various students in the program. Students are also given opportunities to share personal reflections of the program. For students interested in competitively showcasing their skills, *Dancing Classrooms* hosts an annual “Colors of the Rainbow” (CotR) social dance competition for students who want to strut their stuff – the next one being in June 2023 (DC n.d.(d)). To participate, *Dancing Classrooms* partner schools send a team of 12 students (6 partner pairs) to showcase their skills in 1-2 dance forms alongside other school teams. While CotR follows a ballroom competition format, *Dancing Classrooms* stays committed to being the safe, inclusive space modeled in the residencies, and designates non-competitive time on the dance floor for anyone – residency students and general public members - to enjoy dancing together.

Distinguishing between the CE showcase and the CotR competition is important, as they produce very different experiences for youth. As noted in Sherril Dodds’ (2008) textual analysis of *Mad Hot Ballroom* and *Dancing in Jaffa*, each film-documentary demonstrates opportunities for positive transformation of social and group identity; however, they also depict emotional scenes of disappointment, exclusion, and discouragement by youth who did not qualify for the culminating event. Zaslav (2016) similarly notes that “a negative of using ballroom dance was that in the end there was the inevitability of a competition instead of simply a performance” (26).

Rooted in these critiques are themes of *process-driven* (teaching to learn) and *outcome-driven* (teaching to perform) ideologies. Commonly critiqued in sports-education (Hardy et al. 2017; Ronkainen et al. 2021), *outcome-driven* approaches frame achievement as an individual (or team) performance *over* the performance of others (i.e., dancing to determine the “best”), whereas *process-driven* approaches encouragement performance *with* others as achievement for all (i.e., dancing together for collective enjoyment). Moral associations of good or bad are not imprinted on a particular approach, however, *outcome-driven* approaches frequently promote aggression and antisocial behaviors (Kimble, Russo, Berman, and Galindo 2010). While critical analyses of *Dancing Classrooms* film-documentaries raise salient points about competitive programs, expressed concerns overlook the fact that *Mad Hot Ballroom* (2005) and *Dancing in Jaffa* (2013) only documented the “Colors of the Rainbow” social dance competition and excluded the Culminating Event. As of 2023, *Dancing Classrooms* continues hosting both the Culminating Event and Colors of the Rainbow event for folks seeking community performance and competition, respectively.

### **Previous Research on *Dancing Classrooms***

Studies on *Dancing Classrooms* report positive impact on physical fitness (Pennington and Nelson 2020; Huang et al. 2011; Nelson et al. 2011), social skills (Horowitz et al. 2016; PRA 2008), and school climate (SchmidtBonne 2012; Nelson, Wilson, & Guess 2011; Nelson, Wendy & Ramos 2009), while mixed results are reported on academic impact. For example, Hebert’s (2018) experimental evaluation of fifth graders in Nebraska found no significant difference between state-mandated testing for participating and non-participating students, meanwhile an unpublished study of a Pittsburgh residency showed long-term GPA improvement of participants

compared to non-participating students (Pringle 2010). While findings report impact from various affiliate sites, Horowitz and colleagues (2016) reported consistent implementation of *Dancing Classrooms* programming across three sample residencies suggesting that impacts across affiliate sites may be reasonably anticipated. Furthermore, researchers found active, collaborative partnerships between school residencies and *Dancing Classrooms* highly correlated with positive student impact, demonstrating “it takes two to tango.”

This study specifically frames *Dancing Classrooms* as an arts-based peace education program by building upon evaluations by Horowitz et al. (2016) and Philliber Research Associates (2008) which found *Dancing Classrooms* positively affected social skills of participants. In their 2005 program evaluation of *Dancing Classrooms*, Philliber Research Associates (PRA) used pre-/post-testing with students, parents, teaching artists, and teachers to measure changes in student skills, attitudes, and behaviors. Results indicated 72-81% of teachers perceived positive improvements on student social skills from the program, including decreased social anxiety, increased cooperation and teamwork, and increased self-confidence, while Teaching Artists similarly reported students became more respectful of others, gained self-confidence, and worked increasingly well with members of the opposite sex (PRA 2008). 62% of students participating in the study, ages 9-10, indicated they “definitely” learned better cooperation, teamwork, and respect from the program as well.

PRA’s 2005 study was reinforced by a two-year mixed methods study conducted across three *Dancing Classrooms* sites by Horowitz and colleagues (2016) between 2013-2015. Over the two-year period, data was collected through extensive observations by researchers, surveys of schoolteachers and administrators, and interviews to assess *Dancing Classrooms*’ impact on social and emotional learning (SEL) skills. Findings revealed a strong, positive connection

between *Dancing Classrooms* participation and SEL development of participants (Horowitz et al. 2016). The 2013-2015 study also evaluated the consistency of *Dulaine Method* instruction by Teaching Artists across various affiliate sites, revealing the majority of Teaching Artists maintain pedagogical integrity of the *Dulaine Method* regardless of affiliate site. Cultivation of productive social skills that promote collaborative *power-with* relationships are among peace education's core principles (discussed more in Chapter 3). Providing consistent instruction that promotes positive transformation of social skills is what makes *Dancing Classrooms* an ideal case study for an *arts-based peace education* program.

## **Discussion**

*Dancing Classrooms*' history, framework, and previous evaluative research is outlined and discussed in this chapter. Since the program's founding in 1994, *Dancing Classrooms* has retained its core values while transforming curriculum to maintain safety and inclusivity of all participants. As "elegant dancers" embark on their 10-week residency, they are guided by Teaching Artists embodying and role-modeling the *Dulaine Method* principles. Throughout the journey, students learn the history, culture, and movements of various dance styles and are presented with reflective assignments to complement their learning. At the end of the journey, participants showcase their efforts to friends and family during the Culminating Event.

Documents program benefits include improved physical fitness and enhanced social skills, while academic impact requires additional research. Additionally, implementation of the *Dulaine Method* was consistent across several *Dancing Classrooms* affiliate sites, suggesting that program impact may be consistent for participants across affiliate sites.

As discussed in this chapter, *Dancing Classrooms* demonstrates principles of peace education through an arts-based approach. This study contributes several "firsts" to *Dancing Classrooms* research. Firstly, established studies did not include alumni in data collection processes, which this study achieves through electronic surveys and one-on-one interviews with alumni. Secondly, prior research did not examine social skills through Peace and Conflict theoretical lenses, whereas this study applies Intergroup Contact Theory to the *Dulaine Method* framework (discussed in Chapter 5). Thirdly, this study compares alumni's self-reported SEL scoring with their *perceived impact* of the program on their SEL development (discussed in Chapter 4). Lastly, this study investigates the relationship between SEL skills and intimate partner violence (IPV) attitude assessments to assess *Dancing Classrooms*' potential for preventing IPV *power-over* attitudes by cultivating *power-with* attitudes via the *Dulaine Method* (discussed in Chapter 4).

## CHAPTER 3: PEACE STUDIES

“There is no one right way to solve a conflict. Equifinality refers to the existence of many pathways to a desired peaceful end” ~Lois Edmund (2021, 12)

Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) is an interdisciplinary field integrating various theories and frameworks to effectively explore the many nuances and intersectional dimensions of human experiences (Fink 1968). Recognizing the theoretical pluralism of peace and conflict approaches, Toran Hansen encourages practitioners, researchers, and scholars toward a *generalist approach* involving “a broad understanding of conflict resolution theories, processes, models, and techniques to be able to guide conflict parties to the most helpful ways of addressing their conflicts” (6). This study accepts Hansen’s invitation by interweaving literature on violence prevention, arts-based peace education, and intergroup contact theory to evaluate *Dancing Classrooms* as an arts-based peace education program. This chapter summarizes (1) concepts of peace and conflict, (2) frameworks of violence and power, (3) peace education research, and (4) arts-based peace initiatives to effectively contextualize *Dancing Classrooms* as an arts-based peace education program.

### **Concepts of Peace and Conflict**

Succinctly defining *peace* and *conflict* remains a perpetual endeavor for Peace and Conflict scholars, practitioners, and researchers due to variances in sociocultural perspectives and (inter)disciplinary frameworks. Within this study’s context, *conflict* is conceptualized as “tension or an interactive struggle between two or more seemingly incompatible participants” (Edmund 2021, 5). Furthermore, “[c]onflict does not happen *to* people, it happens *between* people” (Hauss



2019, emphasized added by author). Combined, these definitions present *conflict* as an interpersonal tension that is not inherently good or bad, but rather is a sensation generated *by* and *between* people when their goals are (perceivably) incompatible with one another. By framing conflict as an *active* interaction between people rather than a *passively* experienced event, it becomes apparent that empowering people to effectively address the tension and underlying misperceptions they experience is essential for transforming outcomes and relationships. Complementing this active concept of conflict, Anderson (2004) defines *peace* as “a condition in which individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or nations experience low levels of violence and engage in mutually harmonious relationships” (103). Anderson notably avoids defining *peace* by the absence of *conflict* but that of *violence* (a harmful subset of conflict explained later in this Chapter), indicating that *peace* and *conflict* may exist harmoniously rather than exclusively separate.

Prior to initiating any form of peacebuilding (i.e., peace education, post-conflict reconstruction, etc), it is first important to examine what concepts of “peace” and “conflict” inform the desired outcome(s). Is the goal to remove the presence of something undesired or to develop something that is missing and desired? Perhaps it is both, and perhaps it is neither. As an illustrative example, imagine gardening a small plot of tilled and planted soil. Over time, how is the “health” of the garden assessed? Perhaps weeds are happily making themselves at home in the fertile soil. To some, the presence of weeds is not a “healthy” garden, so they prune the garden of weeds and wait for the desired seeds to germinate. But how long may that take? How can it be determined if the seeds will even germinate in the conditions they’ve been planted in? And all the while, how does one determine if the garden is “healthy”? This simple example illustrates a core dilemma for peace and conflict scholars, practitioners, and researchers.

If the metaphorical “garden” symbolizes a relationship within oneself or with others, then what makes a “healthy” (i.e., happy, peaceful) garden? For some, “weeds” (i.e., conflict) are ominous, foreboding signs that must be averted and avoided at all costs. Gardeners who embrace this view of conflict embody a *negative paradigm of conflict* (Edmund 2021; Coleman 2004) where “good” relationships are expected to never have conflict and any signs of disagreement should be ignored and avoided. In the *negative paradigm of conflict*, having a weedless garden (a relationship without overt, visible conflict) makes a “healthy” garden. But is this so? In contrast, some appraise a garden’s “health” based on the plants that thrive (i.e., cooperation, trust, and respect). Sure, weeds may arise, but it is nothing to be alarmed about because weeds naturally grow in well-tended gardens too. The important distinction is gardeners embracing a *positive paradigm of conflict* feel empowered to inclusively collaborate with others to effectively address conflict while simultaneously transforming the “root” causes of the conflict to decrease the likelihood of it happening again (Edmund 2021; Coleman 2004).

Jeffrey and Pruitt (2019) define *peacebuilding* as the “actions, initiatives, policies, and projects that aim to reduce, prevent, or aid in the recovery from conflict and violence of all types” (477). While they frame *peacebuilding* within a post-conflict context, peace initiatives can happen before, during, or after conflict events (Susskind and Larmer 1999). Just as there are *positive* and *negative paradigms of conflict*, peace has also been conceptualized as *positive peace* and *negative peace* (Galtung 1969). Interventions promoting *negative peace*, also referred to as “negative peacebuilding”, typically involve a powerful actor (e.g., the United Nations) to intervene in a conflict by asserting their own economic and military power, such as peace effort (Wenden 1995). The premise of this approach is to cease the overt violence of one or more parties through the “imposed peace” (Johnson and Johnson 2005, 282) of another, often justified,

party. Imposing peace is a *power-over* interaction (explained later in this Chapter) to influence the actions and behaviors of others, ranging from formal sectors of society (e.g., public policy, law enforcement, military intervention) to local, informal sectors (e.g., a parent separating two arguing children). The act itself of imposing peace is not inherently bad or wrong as circumstances may require intervention to de-escalate conflict and ensure safety of involved individuals. It becomes *negative peacebuilding* when the *power-over* interactions are sustained to create a harmful, asymmetrical relationship (e.g., over-policing of minority neighborhoods or authoritative parents demanding obedience from children). Johnson and Johnson (2005) caution that “imposing peace suppresses the conflict but does not resolve underlying grievances and does not establish positive long-term relationships among disputants” (281). Regardless of scale, the premise is “quiet” means peace. Here, we are reminded of the weedless garden and the *negative paradigm of conflict* associated with it. The garden is “healthy” as long as it is weedless (e.g., without conflict).

In contrast, programs promoting *positive peace*, also called *positive peacebuilding*, address conflicts through long-term, sustainable processes that promote harmonious *power-with* interactions based on cooperation and coexistence (Galtung 1964, 1996; Galtung and Fischer 2013; Jeong 2000). *Positive peace* reflects complete absence of covert and overt forms of violence, which can be achieved through inclusive engagement of all participants to ensure previous violence-related conditions are changed to improve social conditions and relationships. Recognizing that *positive* and *negative* terminologies may conflate and misconstrue dynamics of peacebuilding, Hansen encourages a “holistic peace” (Hansen 2016) which mutually embraces techniques of *positive* and *negative peacebuilding* without judgement-based connotations. Decoupling from Galtung’s *positive/negative peacebuilding* terms, Hansen (2016) offers *peace*

*within* (inner peace), *peace between* (relational peace), and *peace among* (structural and environmental peace) as alternative frameworks. This research aligns with Hansen's *peace between* by investigating how *Dancing Classrooms* benefits SEL skills, which prevent IPV attitudes, by "establishing and building mutually beneficial, non-harmful, and morally inclusive relationships with other semi-autonomous individuals" (Hansen 2016, 218).

While *paradigms of conflict* and *positive/negative peacebuilding* share close resemblance, it is important to note a *paradigm of conflict* reflects an *attitude* or ideology for addressing conflict, whereas *positive/negative peacebuilding* reflects the *behaviors* or approaches for responding to conflict. Leaning back into the garden example, a *paradigm* reflects someone's *attitude* or view of a "healthy" garden while *peacebuilding* reflects the *behaviors* or actions used for tending the garden based on held *attitudes*. Understanding that thriving gardens involve pruning weeds and nurturing seeds, *attitudes* and *behaviors* that promote sustainable growth and *power-with* relationships are clearly the ideal.

### **Framing Violence & Power**

Peace and Conflict literature generally frames *power* as an individual's agency, capability, and opportunity to enact change within and around themselves, although it is important to frame power within social context. For international contexts, power may be used as *hard power* (e.g., military intervention, economic sanctions), *soft power* (e.g., diplomacy, citing international policy), and hybrid *smart power* (usage of *hard* and *soft* approaches) (Nye 1990). In localized contexts, individual may exercise their *personal power* to affect changes in their lives while *interpersonal power* demonstrates how people may influence each other, collaboratively or competitively (Yang et al. 2015). Power is not innately violent or harmful, as nonviolent

approaches recognize *power* as a relational construct predicated on social subservience and obedience to authority (Arendt 1969). Like *conflict*, *power* is not inherently bad and harmful as long as the *attitudes* about power encourage non-harmful *behaviors* when it is used. Where power becomes problematic is when it becomes asserted over others (*power-over*) as a form of domination and violence. *Power*, as framed by Rollo May (1998), may be used *for* others to support them, *with* others to collaborate, *over* others to persuade, *against* others for personal gain, or be taken *from* others to exploit and dominate them. This study frames *power-over* behaviors as violent whereas *power-with* behaviors promote transformative peace.

Violence, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is intentionally inflicting physical harm, by threatening to, against oneself or others, resulting in harm, physical or psychological (Krug et al. 2002). This overlaps with Peace and Conflict literature which outlines violence against another person, known as *direct violence*, as a harmful, *power-over* action inflicted on someone through physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological means (Bulhan 1985). While relationships absent of overt *direct violence* may appear happy and peaceful, this makes similar assumptions to *negative peacebuilding* (i.e., the absence of overt conflict). *Power-over* forms of violence may be covert and even normalized, such as fear and repression of a historically oppressed group by a dominant group (Jeong 2000) which may lead to voicelessness of victims, what Shirley and Edwin Ardener call *muted voice* (2005). William Ury and colleagues (1988) note that *power* can respectfully asserted with consent, such as an instructor teaching a student, which is different from abusive forms of power that dominate others. For this study, *power-over* represents non-consensual use of power against an intimate partner to undermine their agency through harmful somatic and non-somatic means. This distinction separates intimate partner violence (IPV) away from mutually consented arrangements involving

one partner being dominant in various relationship contexts. This distinction is significant because consent established in a harmfully asymmetrical *power-over* relationship fails to recognize how the presence of violence, perceived or real, coerces people to say “yes” due to fearing the consequence of saying “no”. In contrast, mutually consenting arrangements allowing dominance by one partner exhibits a *power-with* relationship where both partners collaboratively agreed to the arrangement based on shared trust and respect rather than fear and coercion (Edmund 2021).

Unlike *power-over* behaviors, *power-with* behaviors pursue collaboration, relationship-building, transparent communication, respect, and trust among individuals (May 1998). According to Mitchell (1999), actively practicing communication and social awareness skills found in *power-with* relationships coincides with *conflict transformation* principles of peace and conflict scholarship. Introduced by John Paul Lederach (1997, 2005), *conflict transformation* addresses social power asymmetries and violence by rejecting *power-over* ideologies in favor of collaborative, harmonious relationships (Warren and Cady 1996). Through inclusive dialogues and collaborative interactions, people can collectively identify and address the roots causes of violence. Inspired by John Paul Lederach’s (2005) advocacy for creativity, expression and expression in transformative processes, Cohen and colleagues (2011) note conflict transformation carries newness, curiosity, and hopefulness that encourages *positive peacebuilding*. Furthermore, they describe “creative transformation” as processes that shift conditions and relationships towards harmony and growth. Describing the context of transformation is important because “change itself is ethically neutral – it can refer to new patterns of organization that are life-enhancing, or to new patterns that are destructive” (Cohen et al. 2011, 10). In their edited book, *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative*

*Transformation*, several international arts-based peacebuilding initiatives are presented to illustrate the “creative transformation” concept in post-conflict settings. This research expands arts-based *conflict transformation* by investigating how principles of *positive peacebuilding* can be achieved through peace education and violence prevention.

## **Peace Education**

In Betty Reardon’s (1999) in-depth analysis of peace education origins, she notes that prior to the establishment of the International Peace Research Association in 1964 the terms “irenology” (study of peace) and “polemology” (study of war and conflict) were used in lieu of “peace education.” From their review, Reardon (1999) distinguishes “essential peace education” as education *about* peace which teaches people how to generate peaceful societies by understanding human rights issues, developing effective skills for resolving conflict, and integrating peace principles in education. While traditional prevention which prioritizes inhibition, mitigation, and containment of violence (Boutros-Ghali 1992), contemporary peace research recognizes youth are the future and their views, experiences, and beliefs they form will permeate into the decisions they make (Davis 2016). When peaceful coexistence and non-violent resolution skills are taught to youth, a *culture of peace and nonviolence* (Boulding 1988) emerges where peoples’ interests are interlinked, promoting collaborative relationships and sustainable responses to conflicts (Harris 2010; Johnson and Johnson 2010). Preventative peacebuilding similarly addresses conflict through education, joint activities, and community dialogues to form positive associations and understandings among conflicting parties (Bock 2001). By actively engaging learners to identify systems of power that (in)visibly harms oneself and others (Bajaj 2008; Bajaj and Brantmeier 2011), youth are empowered with skills and knowledge to affect positive social change.

Peace education may be found among formal institutions (i.e., schools, universities) and informal programs (i.e., community centers), representing a continuum of micro and macro implementations (Haavelsruda and Stenberg 2012). Renowned peace education scholar Elise Boulding (1988) presented her concept of *civic culture*, as a set of societal agreements that normalize sharing space, resourcing, and opportunities for the benefit of all. Boulding asserts that intentionally maintaining prosocial, harmonious relationships is necessary to disrupt any formation of divisive narratives of dominance and possessiveness of one person or group over another. While the term “education” may evoke images of a traditional classroom setting, Boulding (1988) encourages there are *learning sites* everywhere, from public forums to individual interactions. For example, Damirchi and Bilge’s (2014) randomized control study of seventy 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Turkey researched how a 12-session peace education programming (PEP) facilitated over an academic year affects development of communication and conflict resolution skills. Findings of pre-/post-testing, both immediately and 3 months later, revealed students who received the PEP scored significantly higher on conflict resolution and communication skills compared to the control group. By empowering youth through peace education, they practice cooperative learning, effective conflict resolution skills, compassionate attentiveness to the experiences of others, understanding of violence-associated power, and a desire for consensual peace among people (Johnson and Johnson 2010; Shapiro 2002). When embraced to the fullest, even a dance becomes a *learning site* of interpersonal (non)verbal communication, somatic collaboration, and mutual discovery of expression.



## **Transformation and Provention**

Lederach's (1997) *conflict transformation* pursues sustainable peace by positively shifting the relationship of parties and generating "new, proactive, empowered action for desired change in those settings" (109). Inspired by Lederach's call to *moral imagination*, Lehner (2021) encourages that creating *cultures of peace* requires interdependence, connection, vulnerability, and empathy, which the Arts promote through expression, communication, and connection with oneself and others. Representing a proactive form of prevention, *provention* involves "taking steps to remove [underlying] sources of conflict and more positively to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control behaviors" (Burton and Dukes 1990, 161). The empowering language of *provention* aligns with *conflict transformation* because it encourages active engagement and teaching of *positive peace* principles to youth.

To achieve positive change, education and skills-based trainings develop participants' capacities and empowers them to actualize sustainable social change for themselves and others. Like Lederach's (2005) *conflict transformation* principles, *transformative learning* positively encourages student self-reflection of experiences and perceptions to achieve greater understanding of themselves and others (Yorks and Kasl 2006; Hoggan et al 2009).

*Transformation* is also emphasized by Bush and Folger (2005) to occur when parties experience an *empowerment shift* through increased confidence in their capacity to affect change, and a *recognition shift* to be considerate of others' needs and goals rather than competitively prioritizing selfish gain. When actualized, parties experience a "virtuous cycle of conflict transformation" where ideas collaboratively emerge for the wellbeing of everyone involved.

*Integrated or inclusive* peace education emphasizes interpersonal interactions of mutual vulnerability and co-experiences to promote empathy and connectedness among youth (Davies

2016). For example, Duffy and Gallagher (2012) found students attending Catholic and Protestant schools in Northern Ireland enjoyed meeting and interacting with other students. Some prevention (or rather provention) programs actively reduce the frequency of violent behaviors by improving community conditions. Proventative approaches include but are not limited to, building safer interpersonal relationships, increasing protective factors through social development, decreasing risk factors, and teaching prosocial skills for effectively resolving issues through inclusive collaboration with others (Howell 2010, 2019; Edmund 2021). Among the many characteristics of violence prevention programs, Nation and colleagues (2003) report that building positive personal relationships is a key feature of effective programming. Baxter (2012) adds that teacher participation and role-modeling of peace education concepts, such as respect and inclusivity, is also fundamental to effective programming.

### **Promoting *Power-With* Relationships**

Teaching prosocial tactics (i.e., *power-with* behaviors) promotes harmonious relationships through collaborative communication, open-mindedness, empathy, and self-expression (Roccas 2002), whereas antisocial tactics (i.e., *power-over* behaviors) damage relationships through selfishness, competitiveness, and disregard for others (Edmund 2021; Howard, Gardner, and Thompson 2007; Deutsch 1973). To positively transform parties towards *power-with* relationships, Johnson and Johnson (2005) encourage *consensual peace* whereby parties are empowered to actively transform their relationship through harmonious interactions rather than competition. *Consensual peace* can be achieved through inclusive education, promoting interdependency through cooperative social skill development, teaching collaborative communication, encouraging positive conflict resolution skills, and role-modeling positive social

values (Johnson and Johnson 2005). On the topic of intergroup interactions, Boulding notes “[c]ontinuous interaction among heterogeneous individuals and group, with no one dominant over the others, would generate a variety of patterns for solving social problems and a variety of social structures, which will be of mutual benefit to various parties” (83). Transforming relationships through interactive co-experiences is the basis of Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT, discussed more in Chapter 5) which this study applies to *Dancing Classrooms*’ programming. Through shared learning and mutual understanding, youth cultivate valuable skills promoting *positive peace*.

Peace education and violence prevention programs teach youth about systems of injustice, inequality, and harmful social norms. Social narratives normalizing dominance over others, such as patriarchal masculinity, demonstrate what Singer and Lalich (1995) calls the *privilege of power*. This *privilege of power* not only legitimizes usage of *power-over* behaviors like manipulation and coercion, but also compels its use. Joseph Kuypers’ (1992) study of “honor codes” in male-dominance narratives emphasizes phrases like “act like a man” or “grow a pair” to instigate compliance with gender normative behaviors, reinforcing socialized gender norms expecting men to be emotionless and pragmatic and women to be emotional and caring (Larieu and Mussen 2010). Manojlovic (2018) highlights how the Arts help “disrupt patterns of domination, common social roles, and communication patterns within communities” (110). Empowerment through peace education naturally integrates post-structural feminism which critically examines how dichotomous social norms, such as masculine and feminine behaviors, confine people’s identities and attitudes about themselves and others. For example, Laura Shepherd’s book *Gender, Violence, and Security: Discourse as Practice* (2008) she reports U.N. Security Council Resolutions framed women as peaceful and passive, normalizing narratives that

women are the peacemakers and men are the warriors. These narratives (dis)empower people to perform within their social expectations and weaves misperceptions about gendered violence which recent IPV research has begun disentangling. Effective youth violence prevention programs “encourage unlearning ineffective resolution methods while promoting effective ones”, as seen in programs like the Adults and Children Together Against Violence (ACT) program and the National Association for the Education of Youth Children (NAEYC) which addresses risk factors of bullying, homophobia, xenophobia, and teen dating violence (Portwood et al. 2011).

### **Arts-based Peacebuilding**

Arts-based peacebuilding initiatives are often overlooked due to lack of theoretical framing (Lance 2012), insignificance in national policies (Hunter and Page 2014), disagreement between results-oriented and process-oriented evaluations (Beller 2009), and historical emphasis on pragmatic benefits of the Arts, such as improved academic performance and economic growth (Stinson 2019). Shank and Schirch (2008) add that marginalization of arts in peacebuilding may be due to perceptions of it being “soft”, as well as some artists harboring concern about integrating the arts for utilitarian purposes. They additionally emphasize researchers must avoid binary thinking of the Arts as being expression or a tool. Instead, programs must focus less on *using* the Arts in favor of acknowledging how the *presence* of the Arts evokes desired outcomes (Shank and Schirch 2008). Rather than being framed as a tool, art is “social action” that evokes communication and connection among people, while also empowering them to affect meaningful change in their lives (Habermas 1985). Renowned arts-based peacebuilding scholar Cynthia Cohen (2015) similarly emphasizes how arts-based peacebuilding enhances nonviolent movements seeking social justice while rehumanizing former enemies through healing and

empathetic connection. International examples of arts-based social action include: nonviolent performance protests against injustice in Zimbabwe (Mutero and Kaye 2019), community performances in Kenya to recover from after post-election violence (Magak, Kilonzo, and Miguda-Attyang 2015), nonformal community dialogues for conflict management in Trinidad (Phillips 2012), youth-centered dialogues in Australia (Pruitt 2008), Indigenous peacebuilding in Fiji and the Philippines (Jeffrey 2017), applied drama to rehumanize RUC members from “The Troubles” in Ireland (Jennings 2016), trauma-informed movement-practices for survivors in Peru and Columbia (Abozaglo 2016), restorative community-building celebrations in Burundi, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of Congo (Caput 2015), and the famous *toyitoyi* protest performances against the Apartheid Regime in South Africa (Slovo 2003).

Arts-based peacebuilding may represent the next generation of peacebuilding due to its transformative potential for establishing sustainable peace through “grassroots” (i.e., community-based) approaches (Premaratna 2018). Peace education research identifies arts-based approaches as an effective means for social reform (Greene 1995) that encourages various life skills, including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Cornett 1999). For example, Barkhordari and colleagues (2016) developed an arts-based peace education program by integrating peace education principles (i.e., prosocial communion skill) with public Arts education to evoke expression, creativity, and connection. They advocate for creative drama (e.g., puppet shows), music performance, storytelling, and cultural knowledge of global historic sites (e.g., Great Wall of China) as artistic modalities for peace education. Addressing the ambiguity of arts-based peacebuilding approaches, Shank and Schirch (2008) designed the “strategic arts-based peacebuilding” framework for practitioners to determine *what* are various forms of arts-based peacebuilding, *how* different arts-based approaches may transform conflict,

and *when* the appropriate timing is for various arts-based approaches. Their “strategic arts-based peacebuilding” contains four distinct categories for *what* the Arts may achieve: (1) waging conflict nonviolently, (2) reducing direct violence, (3) building capacity, and (4) transforming relationships. While Shank and Schirch’s (2008) model is curated for active- and post-conflict contexts, *Dancing Classrooms* fits within the *Building Capacity* category by promoting “constructive relationship patterns between people” (226).

### **Embodying Power-With**

Movement-based pedagogies build upon *embodied knowing*, a body-centered concept promoting interdependence between the body (feeling) and mind (thinking) to treat knowledge as something experientially *felt* instead of merely *thought* (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Gendlin 1978; Hervey 2007). Studd and Cox (2013) add that “Our bodies provide the means to take in (perceive), connect, and interact with the world. Knowing is based in experience and experience is embodied” (15). For example, common phrases like “gut instinct” or “feeling it in my bones” illustrate how people can *feel* something is off without cognitively *thinking* of what it is yet. Movement-based peace education situates people to learn more about themselves, physically and emotionally, which may then permeate into their relationships with others to enhance empathy and mutual understanding. The humanistic tradition of empowering people to “know themselves” (Bertland 2017), founded in the work of Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), has influenced seminal scholars including Paolo Freire, John Dewey, Abraham Maslow, and John Burton, one of the founders of the conflict resolution field. The humanistic approach to education involves a facilitating guide (i.e., teacher) who empowers students by “engaging their reasoning, social capacities, and artistic and practical skills” (Manojlovic 2018) to build empathy and trust within themselves and among

each other. Tjersland's (2019) research on peace education and dance found that the *dancing body* is always *in transformation* through iterative interactions with oneself and others.

Grounding their approach in Gestalt Therapy which describes the intersection of intra- and interpersonal experience as *contact boundary* (Perl 1973), the *dancing body* concept shares significant similarity with Boulding's (1988) *learning sites*.

Dancing also embodies agency to explore social dimensions of power, for dominance or equality and determine means of resistance and healing (Fraleigh 1987; Hanna 1979; Bond 2009). Challenging the passive connotation of "perceiver", Langer (1953) offers *percipient* as an empowering alternative reflecting how people actively choose *to* perceive and recognize oneself or others. Peace education responds positively to this empowerment as it reflects Bush and Folger's (2005) *empowerment* and *recognition shifts* when people tap into their innate strengths and agency. Movement-based peace education promoting prosocial, *power-with* behaviors empower percipients to actively recognize the movements and expressions of themselves and others. While not explicitly discussing *power-with* dynamics, dance scholar Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987) recognizes the *interdependency* of partnered dance, stating "In dance, when two presents itself as two distinct sides of a gestalt singularity (divisible yet cohesive) in contrasted polar and facilitating motion, a complement of partnership is achieved" (201). This "complement of partnership" effectively articulates how *power-with* relationships collaboratively achieve mutual fulfillment while retaining individuality and agency of partners, aligning beautifully with peace education principles. Gendlin (1978) remarks when people recognize the feelings and experience of the others, they may cultivate a collective *felt sense* which occurs through a collective *felt shift* (Gendlin 1978; Beardall 2017) when group members build empathy, understanding, and connection through co-experience.

Being that many arts-based approaches prioritize empowerment, positive transformation, and healing of conflict-affected persons, distinction is required between arts-based peace education and dance/movement therapy (D/MT). The American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA n.d.) defines dance/movement therapy (D/MT) as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process which furthers the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of the individual”, traditionally between a practitioner and a client (n.p.) in a post-harm context. While some D/MT and arts-based peace education approaches may overlap in addressing harms and trauma of conflict-affected peoples (Singer 2008; Harris 2008), this study examines *Dancing Classrooms* as an arts-based violence prevention within in a pre-conflict context. While *Dancing Classrooms* alumni may have experienced D/MT-related benefits of the program, it is beyond this study’s scope to account and measure for such impact. Future D/MT research should explore *Dancing Classrooms’* impact which may meaningfully inform trauma-informed arts approaches.

### **Embodying Prosocial Skills**

Youth development of positive social skills is important for encouraging healthy lifelong behaviors and attitudes (Boulding 1988). As real-life circumstances become less predictable and highly stressful, individuals lean into the social and emotional life skills they practiced and observed by others. By teaching youth how to connect with their emotions, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and be accepting of vulnerability, they possess the skills to face uncertainty with self-confidence and resiliency. Consciously cultivating social skills through coordinated movement with others integrates social values in an enjoyable way that is innovative in peace education research. Bang (2016) examines *how* arts-based approaches promote cooperative relationships and constructive engagement with conflict, even when intractable,



while also framing an arts-based theory of change for practice by blending perspectives on adult education and transformative learning. Conflict scholars LeBaron, MacLeod, and Acland outline how transformative arts-based peace education promotes collaborative interactions, enhances self-confidence, and increase social and emotional awareness of participants in their edited book *The Choreography of Resolution: Conflict, Movement, and Neuroscience* (2013). Arts-based peace education involving collaborative performances, such as dancing and theatre, encourages positive interdependent relationships among performers as they collaboratively strive to achieve their “goal” to perform confidently (Deutsch 1962; Johnson & Johnson 1989). Early peace education research recognized how somatic interaction and movement could build empathetic understanding among participants, what peace scholar Elise Boulding called “connected knowing” (1988). Many years later, neuroscience research discovered that mirror neurons directly influenced how people recognize and respond to the bodily expressions of others, known as “kinesthetic empathy” (Reynolds and Reason 2013; Gallese 2003). As people build positive social connections, their social wellbeing (Newman et al. 2000) and antisocial behaviors associated with social isolation from peers, affiliation with other antisocial groups (e.g., gangs), and dropping out of school are reduced (Lee and Breen 2007; Schaub-Moore 2017).

This research emphasizes how social dancing cultivates positive connections and empathetic understanding among people (Gibb 1961; Gottman 2014; Sillars) which empowers people to collaboratively support each other (Deutsch 2014). While competitive communication promotes adversarial interactions such as deception and domination to attain one’s goals without consideration to others (Maltz and Borker 1982), it is important to note competitive and non-competitive social dancing are not oppositional to developing positive relationships and social behaviors. For instance, self-achievement of an individual or group are emphasized as part of a

competitive dance culture, then competitive participants may be less socialized to inclusive participation and unjudged self-expression compared to community dance participants (Giguere 2019). However, not all competitive cultures favor self-interest solely and social dance embraces varying degrees of competitive and non-competitive attitudes. From a peace studies perspective, significance lies in practices that build trust between people by promoting cooperative relationships based on open communication, mutual understanding, and mutual empathy to set clear intentions and expectations for everyone (Lewicki 2006). High trust reflects a degree of predictable interaction with trusted others, reducing uncertainty and anxiety. When trust is broken, it requires sincere effort to restore trust and honest communication, which Janus Spring (2004) calls *trust-enhancing behaviors*.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that the prosocial benefits of social dance do not mean dance is a *one-size-fits-all* tool that guarantees peace (Jeffrey and Pruitt 2019), as the Arts can serve destructive purposes or promote nonviolent social change (Shank and Schirch 2008). Echoing previous caution about *transformation* being “ethically neutral” (Cohen et al. 2011, 10), the “arts” may be used in harmful or harmonious ways depending on context and intent (Ayindo 2009; Shank & Schirch 2008; Zelizer 2003), as seen in Borisenko’s (2016) research on the impact of performance theatre in Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. While they found participants positively experienced greater communication skills, problem solving skills, confidence and self-esteem, and sense of inclusion in community, risks of re-traumatization, emotional insecurity, and physical insecurity also arose. Borisenko (2016) identified creating a safe space with trained and motivated facilitators as an important factor for enhancing positive effects of arts experiences. Cohen (2015) additionally notes risks of re-traumatization which may be mitigated by empowering participants which options for experiencing Arts programming and

clearly connecting teaching goals with real world applications. These considerations are invaluable for creating a safe, inclusive, trauma-informed space, which *Dancing Classrooms* remains committed to providing as noted in Chapter 2.

### **Arts-based Peace Education and *Dancing Classrooms***

While arts-based peacebuilding approaches are gaining international recognition (Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, & Walker 2011), dance-related peacebuilding remains largely unexamined in comparison (Jeffrey and Pruitt 2019). Dance-based arts interventions offer unique generation of teamwork (Harland et al. 2005), with recent scholarship emphasizing intersectional benefits of dance, conflict resolution, and violence prevention (Jeffrey and Pruitt 2019). When people choose to coordinate their efforts together, referred to as “synchronized behaviors” (Hove and Risen 2009), they practice collaborative behaviors that build social bonds and fosters empathy (Coleman et al. 2014; Wiltermuth and Health 2009). Dance scholars recognize how dance presents similar “shared embodied experiences” (Beausoleil & LeBaron 2013, 145) that positively impact social skills and improve relationships (LeBaron, MacLeod, & Acland 2013). Jeffrey and Pruitt’s (2019) Typology for Dancing for Peace categorizes existing dance-based programs into six groups: (1) diplomatic, (2) collective forms, (3) social change and/or protest artist based, (4) education, (5) dance movement therapy, and (6) social change and/or protest-community based. The author’s typology included *Dancing Classrooms* in evaluations and placed it within the education typology, reinforcing this study’s assertion of *Dancing Classrooms* as an arts-based peace education program. Education, in the context of Jeffrey and Pruitt’s (2019) typology, reflects dance-based programming that serves as “a resource for teaching nonviolence, conflict resolution, and social and emotional intelligence” (484). Examples of

(peace) education included the U.S. school-based *Peaceful Play* violence prevention education program (Eddy 2009) and Kornblum's body-based violence prevention program for children *Prevention through Movement* (Hervey and Kornblum 2006), which studies found positively impacted social skills development of youth. Being the first violence prevention study of *Dancing Classrooms* programming, this research contributes valuable insights connecting social and emotional learning (SEL) skills and violence prevention goals for arts-based peace education scholarship.

The most significant example of a social dance program comparable to *Dancing Classrooms* is called *Minds in Motion*. Modeled after the NYC-based National Dance Institution founded by famous ballet dancer Jacques d'Amboise, *Minds in Motion* was formed in 1993 by the Richmond Ballet to teach dance in public schools. While *Minds in Motion* programming is typically year-round, Zaslav (2016) evaluated an extension program of *Minds in Motion* held in central Israel which successfully brought youth of Jewish and Arab communities together over a two-week residency. Zaslav noted the self-confidence, self-expression, and communication skills of youth were positively affected by programming, however, the brief duration cut short deeper relationship building. *Minds in Motion* teaches non-contact social dancing, distinctly different from *Dancing Classrooms'* partnered social dance model. Zaslav compares her observations of *Minds in Motion* with the film-documentary *Dancing in Jaffa*, noting that the competitive element of *Dancing Classrooms* undermines the collaborative teamwork and inclusive principles proclaimed by the program. They further note the Dulaine Method has potential for meaningful peacebuilding, yet the rigid adherence to male-female partnering and competition diminishes the program's full potential. Zaslav (2016) does positively note how *Dancing Classrooms* creates space to genuinely (re)build relationships with others through respectful communication and

physical interactions, and the program's duration is ideal for relationship building and affecting positive social changes. Fortunately, as noted in Chapter 2, *Dancing Classrooms* features non-gendered dance roles (e.g., “left-footed” and “right-footed”) and hosts the Culminating Event and Colors of the Rainbow events for youth to demonstrate their growth and express themselves among peers. In doing so, *Dancing Classrooms* effectively promotes conditions for Intergroup Contact Theory (expanded in Chapter 5) by blending competitive and collaborative values to promote *power-with* behaviors and positive relationships.

## **Discussion**

Building on dance and peace education scholarship, *Dancing Classrooms* represents an effective program for positively transforming interpersonal attitudes, behaviors, and relationships as an arts-based peace education program. Key principles of peace education are outlined and connected with arts-based peace education, demonstrating its potential as the next generation of peacebuilding through locally centered community building (Premaratna 2018). Distinction is made between D/MT and *Dancing Classrooms* programming, although research in this area would benefit general knowledge for researchers, scholars, and practitioners.

Research shows movement-based peace education and violence prevention programs effectively promote prosocial, *power-with* behaviors to benefit interpersonal attitudes and interactions while simultaneously diminishing antisocial, *power-over* attitudes and behaviors (Jeffrey and Pruitt 2019; Hervey and Kornblum 2006). *Dancing Classrooms* presently remains the only partner-based social dance program operating at a national capacity over the past 27 years. Several key arts-based peace education principles and benefits in this chapter, all of which are anticipated benefits of *Dancing Classrooms* programming as well. Reflecting the *strategic*

*what* of arts-based peacebuilding (Shank and Schirch 2008), *Dancing Classrooms* has the potential to improve interpersonal communication, connections, trust, respect, and express through its inclusive programming and collaborative design. Subsequent Chapters connect the expected benefits of *Dancing Classrooms* programming with IPV prevention, SEL development, and the ICT framework.

## CHAPTER 4: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

While gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against women (VAW), and intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) are all significant global crises, the CDC defines intimate partner violence (IPV) as “physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner (i.e., spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, or ongoing sexual partner)” (Breiding et. al 2015). This definition is ideal for this research because it inclusively emphasizes interpersonal relationship behaviors over gender-based definitions of violence that overlook non-heterosexual relationships. At the same time, this study addresses how attitudes supporting patriarchal masculinity normalize *power-over* attitudes against partners and increases likelihood of IPV attitudes and behaviors, regardless of gender. Understanding the sociocultural narratives of *power-over* attitudes helps IPV prevention programs more effectively empower *power-with* attitudes and behaviors for achieving *positive peace* and safer, happier relationships. This research lies adjacent to identity-based theories of self and gender; however, this study does not examine the (de)construction of self and group identities as seen in Social Identity Theories (Tajfel 1981; Verkuyten 2005; Brewer 2007). Rather, this research emphasizes the interpersonal behavior through Intergroup Contact Theory for assessing SEL and IPV-related attitudes.

### **Impact and Scope of IPV**

The World Health Organization estimates 245-307 million partnered women 15 years and older experienced IPV in 2018 and an estimated 641-753 million partnered women would experience IPV at least once since being 15 years of age (WHO 2021). WHO (2021) additionally reports about 25% of former or currently partnered women 15-19 years old have been subjected to IPV

at least once in their lifetime. In China, an estimated 24.7% of women will experience IPV in their lifetime (ACWF & NBSC 2012), while one in ten women in the European Union are estimated to experience IPV in their lifetime (Eurostat 2018). Annually, an estimated \$5.8 billion is allocated to address IPV in the United States (Arias and Corso 2005) with an estimated lifetime economic burden of \$3.6 trillion (Peterson et al. 2018). Prior to the pandemic, approximately \$1.5 trillion USD was invested globally for addressing VAW (UN Women 2020). IPV survivors face myriad of post-violence challenges, including economic distress (Breiding et al. 2015) and lower academic performance (Jordan et al. 2014).

In the United States, national reports indicate IPV is a critical issue for many relationships. For example, the 2020 National Criminal Victimization Survey, which includes incidents *not* reported to the police, indicated that 484,830 people were treated violently by an intimate partner and 319,950 people were raped or sexually assaulted (Morgan and Thompson 2021). These findings, however, do not reflect the full spectrum of violence occurring due to underreporting factors, such as survivors being “[a]fraid of reprisal by offender or others” (U.S. Census Bureau 2003, p. 170). Previously a 2011 CDC National Survey involving 12,727 interviewees (6,879 women and 5,848 men) reported an estimated 8.8% of women (approx. 10.5 million) had been raped by an intimate partner in their lifetime compared to an estimated 0.5% of men (approx. 500,000). However, when accounting for non-sexual forms of violence by an intimate partner, women were estimated to experience physical violence (31.5%) and psychological aggression (47.1%) comparable to men’s estimation to experience physical violence (27.5%) and psychological violence (46.5%) (Breiding et al. 2011). A separate CDC study (Black et al. 2010) reported 33% of women and 25% of men experienced some form of violence by an intimate partner. These findings reveal that sexual violence against women is



more prevalent than against men; however, other forms of physical, emotional, and psychological IPV occur at similar rates for men and women. Thus, intimate partner violence is not merely a gender-based issue, it is a people-based issue rooted in sociocultural norms as IPV research has shown.

### **GBV and IPV**

Prior to IPV, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against women (VAW), and intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) were interchangeable terms that collectively reflected disproportionate violence inflicted against women by, oftentimes, men (Devries et al. 2013; World Health Organization 2013; United Nations 2006). For example, Article 1 of the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defined “violence against women” as any GBV that physically, sexually, or psychologically harms women, “including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (OHCHR n.d., n. p.). Additionally, of the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015, SDG 5.2a specifically calls for eliminating “physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former partner” against women for improving social conditions (UN n.d., n.p.). Emphasis on GBV against women is rightfully emphasized, as the U.N. estimates 1-of-3 women globally (approx. 1.28 billion) will experience sexual violence at least once in their lifetime (UNDPE 2008). Similarly, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) estimates 95% of people trafficked and sexually exploited in the EU are women, and that one in three women (15 years or older) experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes (FRA 2014).

More recently, UN Women (2021) reports a global “shadow pandemic” of violence against women (VAW) emerged simultaneously with the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on a representative sample of 16,154 women across thirteen countries between April 2021 and September 2021, researchers reported VAW increased by 45%, 70% of women experienced more frequent verbal and physical abuse, and 25% of women experienced greater household conflict and feelings unsafe at home (UN Women 2021). Internationally, requests for domestic violence services drastically rose during the first months of COVID-19 lockdowns (Mlambo-Ngcuka 2020) as seen in France (30%), Argentina (25%), Cyprus (30%), and Singapore (33%). In Italy, GBV victim hotlines similarly surged within the first month of pandemic compared to the previous three years (Lundin et al. 2020), while DV helpline activity increased 39% in Argentina within the first month of the mandatory lockdown (Polischuk and Fay 2020). While some areas reported marked decreases in DV service requests, advocates suspect this reflects underreporting due to DV victims fearing their abuser discovers their request during mandatory lockdown (Southall 2020). Semple & Ahmed (2020) add that GBV rates in Latin America persisted during the pandemic while other crimes sharply decreased.

These statistics demonstrate the dire need for prevention initiatives for promoting safer relationships through *power-with* social behaviors. Unfortunately, due to the nature of female-oriented GBV definitions, other forms of violence may be masked and unacknowledged. To illustrate how *power-over* dynamics may form from socially perceived gender behaviors, this study utilizes the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) inclusive definition of gender-based violence (GBV) as “any form of violence against an individual based on biological sex, gender identity or expression, or perceived adherence to socially-defined expectations of what it means to be man or woman, boy or girl” and “is rooted in gender-related power differences” (CDC

n.d.(a), n.p.). Specifically highlighting the last segment, “rooted in gender-related power differences”, this study theoretically posits *Dancing Classrooms* effectively deconstructs patriarchal masculine attitudes promoting *power-over* others while simultaneously reconstructing social norms to share *power-with* others. Further, IPV research reports patriarchal masculine attitudes accepting *power-over* other people can across genders and sexualities (Reed et al. 2010). Therefore, acknowledging IPV as a sociocultural issue expands the range of IPV prevention programming to promote safer relationships of all people, regardless of social identities and sexual orientations.

### **IPV is Inclusive**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) inclusively acknowledges interpersonal relations without heteronormative imposition of values (Reed et al. 2010). Meta-analyses on IPV studies report IPV is often perpetrated by both partners, referred as “bidirectional”, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of individuals (Archer 2002; Chan 2011; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 2012). Ali, Dhingra, and McGarry’s (2016) typologies of IPV distinguishes “violence” as underlying factors justifying *power-over* behaviors against a partner and “abuse” as the manifestation of those attitudes into physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual harm against their partner. *Power-over* behaviors may include but are not limited to emotional abuse, intimidation, gaslighting, economic manipulation, threats, and coercion (Pence & Paymar 1993). Johnson (1995) describes these *power-over* behaviors as Coercive Controlling Violence (CCV) (i.e., unidirectional), which becomes Mutual Violent Control Violence (MVCV) (i.e., bidirectional) when both partners use CCV (Beck et al. 2013). However, severity of behavior and harm correlates with gender, such as men-perpetrated violence being more severe (Archer 2002).

Additionally, while bidirectional IPV rates among LGBTQ+ couples are comparable with heterosexual couples, discrimination and internalized homophobia may increase risk of harm, either by or against a partner (Decker et al. 2018). For example, Gehring and Vaske's (2017) analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health found adolescent IPV victims of same-sex partnerships were more likely to respond violently to partners than IPV victims of opposite-sex partnerships. Most common IPV pattern is bidirectional, accounting for 40-60% of reported IPV (Neidig 1993; Stets and Straus 1989; Whitaker et al. 2007). Thus, IPV is more likely to occur between partners with high IPVA than unidirectionally against a nonviolent partner (Bartholomew and Cobb 2011; Stets and Straus 1989; Whitaker et al. 2007).

### **IPV Against Men**

West and Zimmerman (1987) coined the phrase “doing gender” to demonstrate how masculinity is an assertion of will that *men do*, stemming from patriarchal expectations used to assess “appropriateness” of an individual’s behavior based on their presented gender (Fixmer-Oraiz 2019). Gender stereotypes socialize men to be authoritarian and dominant (Eagly and Karau 2002; Marecek et al. 2004) while socializing women to be accepting of and submissive to violence by men (Alvarez et al. 2018; Moreno 2007; Han, Jeong, & Kim 2017; Wang 2016). For men and women, gender norms are harmful by forcing individuals to behave in ways that follow patriarchal social expectations (Carpenter and Walters 2001; Rollero 2016; Wesche et al. 2016). However, studies by Foshee et al. (1999) and Próspero (2006) demonstrate that aggressive *masculine* traits can be similarly socialized among women in various circumstances.

Thus, addressing IPV attitudes of control, violence, and abuse is not merely a gender-centered issue, they are a people-centered issue. For example, Vickers (1993) notes women may

adopt masculine values for credibility and power because patriarchy societies typically deny respect and authority to feminine behaviors, particularly in leadership roles. Reardon (1985) add that such individuals are not being “fake” but are adapting to social spaces where success is determined by behaviors favoring masculine values. Unfortunately, mimicking masculine behaviors often internalizes gendered norms and reinforces masculine dominance as an ideal (Reardon 1985). On the flipside, the same patriarchal masculine norms expecting men to be strong, sexually dominate, and non-vulnerable makes reporting for male IPV victims more difficult. For example, Machado and colleagues (2017) found male IPV victims experience more negative emotional treatment and difficulty accessing services compared to female IPV victims (Machado et al. 2017), while others report male IPV victims may not seek services to avoid feelings of shame and stigmatization (Tsui, Cheung, and Leung 2010). Furthermore, male IPV victims may avoid seeking help due to feeling manipulated, controlled, and fearful of their abusive female partners, resulting in underreporting (Bates 2020).

## **LGBTQ+ IPV**

Heteronormative biases frame gender paradigms perpetuating patriarchal values, both for unidirectional biases of only men harming women as well as overlooking LGBTQ+ relationships (Cannon and Buttell 2015). IPV circumvents this by acknowledging the intersectionality of various identities and how they are influenced, individually and collectively, by social systems of power (Crenshaw 1994). For instance, IPV research has largely focused on domestic violence between men and women (Archer 2000; Hamby 2009); however, growing IPV research on LGBTQ+ relationships reveal it is not merely a gender-based issue (Ard and Makadon 2011; Baker et al. 2013; Balsam et al. 2005; Duke and Davidson 2009; Eaton et al. 2008; Hassouneh

and glass 2008; Landolt and Dutton 1997). In a 2015 U.S.-based study using the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), researchers reported 36.4% of women and 33% of men will experience IPV at least once in their lifetime, with women reporting more serious sexual and physical violence compared to men (Smith et al. 2018). Separate findings from a 2010-2012 NISVS estimate 47% of men and women experience psychological-based IPV in their lifetime (Smith et al. 2017), with men being more likely to commit psychological IPV (i.e., controlling behavior) in some cases (Próspero 2006). Meanwhile, current or former intimate partners commit 50% of female homicides in the U.S. (Petrosky et al 2017), while global estimates at 40% (Stöckl et al. 2013). IPV against racial and sexual minorities occurs more frequently than against white and heterosexual people, respectfully (Black et al. 2011).

Messinger (2017) notes underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ persons in IPV literature stems from historical stigmatization and legal oppression which forced LGBTQ+ persons to hide their relationships and identities from the public. This in turn made representative sampling difficult as people did not want to “out” themselves. When IPV became publicly acknowledged it was in response to spousal abuse in heteronormative marriages. Early publications like *The Wife Beater* (Schultz 1960) and *Battered Wives* (Martin 1976) reflect the gendered emphasis of IPV at the time. Additionally, same-sex relationships were kept secret due to prohibitive legislation and social norms at the time (Knauer 2001). Thus, IPV within LGBTQ+ relationships were always present, just unseen until social norms and legal frameworks became accepting of the plurality that is human connection and intimacy. Bisexual women are at greater risk of IPV than heterosexual and homosexual women (Bermea, Van Eeden-Moorefield, and Khaw 2018; Messinger 2011), and transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people report greater frequently of IPV than cisgender people (Valentine et al. 2017). Young adults (16-24) are at

highest risk among age groups to experience IPV, with an estimated 20% experiencing IPV in college (NCDV 2015).

### **IPV Provention through Peace Education**

Collectively, IPV research demonstrates that violence against a partner is not situated to one gender or sexuality but is rooted in attitudes accepting *power-over* others. Addressing IPV from a Peace and Conflict perspective, provention is possible through an interactive, interpersonal approach promoting *power-with* behaviors while simultaneously diminishing *power-over* attitudes. To achieve this, an understanding of IPV protective and risks factors is necessary for implementing effective provention programs. Effective IPV provention requires programs to avert risk factors for *power-over* attitudes by empowering *power-with* attitudes. In peace education, this involves acknowledging underlying factors of violence and removing gendered associations of power, prestige, and social class to transform social norms. Gender-based social norms are typically defined in contrast to one another, with *femininity* representing compassion and sensitivity and *masculinity* representing authority and control (French 1985), as many movies, shows, and fairy tales demonstrate with the masculine “knight in shining armor” saving the feminine “damsel in distress.” These narratives perpetuate *power-over* gender norms which objectify femininity as being powerless, indebted, and submissive to the masculine “savior” who aids them (Ruddick 1989).

Social anthropologist Margaret Mead (1935) notes that many cultures invest more authority in men than women, perpetuating patriarchal social norms, normalizing masculine dominance, and associating femininity with emotional responsiveness and cooperation. By imprinting dominance-based attitudes within patriarchal masculinity, acceptance of *power-over*

attitudes is expected and justified (Reardon 1985). For example, Loveland and Raghavan's (2017) study of 137 heterosexual men attending court-mandated batterers' treatment program found participants were taught masculine views supporting male dominance and hostile sexism toward women non-conforming to gender roles which justified coercive and controlling behaviors. When men and women share accepting attitudes of patriarchal masculine dominance, a "psychological patriarchy" (Real 2002) which justifies and supports *power-over* relationships emerges. Boulding (1988) advocates patriarchal order is not a biologically determined phenomenon, but merely a pervasive, enduring "social artifact" (62). Peace education addresses this social injustice by teaching people to see each other as a "full person" (Reardon 1985) and to be "concerned about the situation of the other as a fellow human being, not as an instrument for fulfilling one's own needs" (Boulding 1988, 77). Prior to understanding the benefits of peace education, it is important to acknowledge how education and IPV attitudes are interlinked.

### **IPV Awareness**

Various international studies find education strongly predicts prevalence of IPV attitudes (Gracia & Herrero 2006; Wang, 2016). For example, a study of Iraqi women found uneducated participants were two-to-four times more likely to accept IPV than educated participants (Linos, Khawaja, & Kaplan 2012), while a separate study in Spain found uneducated respondents were 30% more likely to accept IPV behaviors (Gracia & Tomás, 2014). While some studies present women as being more accepting of IPV than men (Tran et al. 2016), Wang's (2016) empirical analysis found these studies did not acknowledge that women's education level was lower than men's education level within the specific geographic and cultural contexts studied. In some instances, IPV accepting attitudes stemmed from lacking knowledge of what constitutes



“violence” by harmers. In Rollero’s (2020) study of IPV treatment programs, they reported IPV perpetrators shifted their attitudes about IPV when taught various forms of violence beyond the physical and how gender norms influence perceived “acceptance” of IPV.

Similarly, Wang’s (2019) study on IPV perceptions of 3,474 Chinese college freshman found physical and sexual violence were condemned but psychological abuse was not considered violence by participants. These studies demonstrate how socialization of violent *power-over* attitudes may justify and conceal IPV behaviors. Furthermore, these findings demonstrate how defining “peace” as the absence of “violence” is flawed and unsustainable. Is a relationship peaceful merely by the absence of violence, or does it require more to be shared with partners? Positively transforming perceptions of *power-over* to *power-with* address this lapse in *positive peace* that IPV perpetrators and victims may benefit from. Abramsky et al. (2016) further note that preventing IPVA should be a broader social and community initiative that promotes prosocial behaviors and awareness of various forms of violence, rather than solely changing attitudes among perpetrators. While this study focuses on IPV in the United States, this research demonstrates how arts-based education may effectively reduce IPVA in other parts of the world by proactively teaching *power-with* social skills and promoting positive relationships.

### **IPV Risk Factors**

Antisocial behaviors are strong predictive factors for IPV (Huesmann, Dubow, and Boxer 2009; White and Widom 2003; Capaldi et al. 2012), including “lack of nonviolent social problem-solving skills”, “poor behavioral control and impulse”, “strict gender roles”, and “desire for power and control in relationships (CDC n.d.(c), n.p.). Attitudes supporting “male superiority and sexual entitlement” and “women’s inferiority and sexual submissiveness” are additional risk

factors of IPV and sexual violence (CDC n.d.(b), n.p.). These attitudes reflect a willingness to influence other people forcefully with authoritative and domineering (i.e., *power-over*) behaviors, reinforced by gender-normative associations of power (Howell 2020). Sidanius & Pratto (1999) describe attitudes promoting asymmetrical domination of one group by another as Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). Unsurprisingly, SDO research finds men more accepting of SDO than women, and that SDO negatively correlates with empathy (Pratto et al 1994). More recent scholarship by Arnold K. Ho and colleagues (2015; 2016) expanded SDO into two categories, SDO-Dominance (i.e., desire for *power-over* others) and SDO-Egalitarianism (i.e., desire for more *power-to* achieve goals than others), the first reflecting antisocial attitudes pertinent to IPV. Dominance-oriented attitudes also contribute to rejection sensitivity (RS) where one or more parties fear the outcome of a conflict, resulting in either aggression as IPV or withdraw as self-silencing (Inman and London 2022).

The interplay between SDO and RS is made apparent in research on “token resistance” and consent. Muehlenhard (2011) describes “token resistance” as occurring when someone’s sexual advance is rejected but they interpret the other person’s “no” to meaning “yes” on the belief that the rejection is either disingenuous or is enticing further pursuit by the initiator (Sprecher et al. 1994; Shotland and Hunter 1995). In Emmers-Sommer’s (2016) For example, when asking college students their perceptions about “token resistance”, Emmers-Sommer’s (2016) reported that regardless of if a man or woman declined a sexual advance, male observers were more likely to describe the behavior as token resistance than female observers. Recognizing how “token resistance” attitudes undermine consent, U.S. colleges and universities now educate about *affirmative consent* – “yes” means “yes” – to place emphasis on consensual acceptance of sexual advances (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault 2014;

Jozkowski 2015; State University of New York 2014; Curtis and Burnett 2017). While greater exploration between SDO and RS is beyond this study's scope, research shows strong connections between *power-over* attitudes align with IPV risk factors. To successfully address IPV attitudes and behaviors, people must be empowered to recognize and experience them to *power-with* interactions.

### **IPV Protective Factors and SEL**

Given the beneficial qualities of *power-with* relationships (see Chapter 3) and SEL skills (see later in this chapter), it is apparent that the best prevention is *provention* by developing positive, interpersonal attitudes that empower *power-with* behaviors and relationships. More specifically, the Center for Disease Control outlines several key protective factors for preventing IPV: (1) *emotional health and connectedness*, (2) *empathy and concern for how one's actions affect others*, (3) *strong social support networks*, and (4) *stable, positive relationships with others*" (CDC n.d.(b); n.d.(c)). At first glance, the five core SEL skills (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) are clearly demonstrated by CDC guidelines, which IPV research has already acknowledged. Based on analyses of IPV Prevention Programs, Nolon and colleagues (2017) found six core characteristics of effective IPV Prevention Programs, emphasizing "social-emotional learning programs for youth" and "healthy relationship programs for couples" as one of them. Confidently establishing trusting relationships, within oneself and with others, is deeply intertwined with CDC protective factors and SEL skills. By building mutual understanding and support, people gain trust with each other (Lewicki, Barry, and Saunders 2010; Butler 1995, 1999), and by building trust within oneself they feel empowered to confidently interact with new people and environments. In conjunction

with *positive peace* principles and SEL literature, protective factors actively prevent violence-related behaviors and attitudes through positive interpersonal connections, emotional self-regulation, and empathy with others (Howell 2010; CDC 2020). With this understanding in-hand, the natural next step is to discuss programs that empower protective factors and *power-with* behaviors.

### **Assessing IPV Attitudes**

Social behavioral theories, notably Planned Behavior Theory (Ajzen 1988) and Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980), suggest attitudes predict behaviors because behaviors are chosen based on perceived accessibility. Framed within the social norms approach, research indicates attitudes highly predict VAW and IPVAW due to sociocultural and individual beliefs that socialize violent behaviors as justified and acceptable (Berkowitz 2003a, 2003b; Cornelius & Resseguie 2007; Gracia, Lila, & Santirso 2020; Flood & Pease 2009; Gracia & Lila 2015, Ferrer & Bosch 2014; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2015; Gracia & Tomas 2014). For example, Zakar and colleagues (2013) reported that Pakistani men who committed IPV against their wives self-reported previously held sociocultural beliefs that the “ideal wife” was submissive and docile while men were expected to be dominant and controlling, which is consistent with recent research on other Arab countries (Mojahed et al. 2022). Many assessments emphasize participants’ Intimate Partner Violence-related Attitudes (IPVA), such as sexual assault and rape (Newman and Colon, 1994) and physical violence (Dahlberg et al., 2005); however, reporting of IPVA is difficult due to social desirability (Ferrer-Perez et al. 2020). Attempts have been made to expand IPVA reporting, as seen with Martín-Fernández and colleagues (2017) who developed and validated the Acceptability of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (A-IPVAW) scale.

Using 1,800 respondents recruited via social media and 50 IPVAW offenders for concurrent validity analyses, Martín-Fernández and colleagues (2017) found higher A-IPVAW among men than women and that IPVAW offenders scored higher than men from the general population.

### **Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale – Revised (IPVAS-R)**

Researching how attitudes toward IPV may predict future victimization or perpetration, Smith and colleagues (2005) piloted an Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale (IPVAS) within a university setting for measuring three key indicators within IPV research: (1) *Abuse*, (2) *Control*, and (3) *Violence*. Using a pre-test and 14-week post-test, researchers discovered the IPVAS significantly predicted IPV based on scale results. While Smith et al. (2005) lacked cross-validation and validity testing of data in their study, a follow-up study by Fincham, Braithwaite, and Pasley (2008) performed the validity tests using their Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale – Revised (IPVAS-R; see Appendix B) Scale and found validity tests supported the three-factor structure of abuse, control, and violence within the IPVAS-R. The *abuse* subscale measures how acceptable forms of verbal, emotional, and psychological violence are within a relationship, such as public humiliation, making threats, and emotional manipulation. *Control* reflects acceptance of possessive behaviors and social dominance, such as forbidding communication with gender-opposite individuals, limiting activities with friends, and requiring detailed accounts of one's day. Lastly, *violence* reflects acceptance of physical harm against a partner or their personal belongings. These three attitudes demonstrate *power-over* attitudes accepting of emotional harm (*abuse*), physical harm (*violence*), or relational dominance (*control*) towards, or by, a partner. The IPVAS-R is promising for IPV preventative interventions because predictions are based on existent IPV attitudes rather than prevalence of prior IPV experiences,

like in the A-IPVAW (Martín-Fernández et al. 2017). Utilizing the IPVAS-R with *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, this study adds to IPV prevention literature by investigating connections between IPV-related attitudes, SEL skills, and the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy.

### **IPV Prevention and Movement Arts**

Gender scholars note that *being* a gender involves *doing* gendered behaviors that are learned through social interactions (Paechter 2006, 2012; Pascoe 2005, 2012; West & Zimmerman 1987). Michau and colleagues (2015) add that “benefit-based interventions using discourses of safer, happier, healthier relationships between women and girls and men and boys” (1673) are essential for effective prevention of VAW. This suggests that IPV attitudes, rooted in patriarchal masculine *power-over* values, may positively shift into *power-with* attitudes through creative social interactions, such as collaborative movement and embodied dialogue. Fortunately, dance achieves this by opening space for individuals to deconstruct gendered behaviors and perceived identities through interactive movement and expression (Watson 2018; Cruz 2004). While there is a dearth of dance-based IPV prevention research, effective movement-based Arts programs are shown to effectively decrease *power-over* attitudes and behaviors through movement and interpersonal interactions. For example, Eddy (2009) reported positive impacts of dance/movement violence prevention among six K-12 schools in the United States, while Lynn Koshland’s (2003) *Peace Through Dance/Movement* program taught violence prevention in elementary schools and reported significantly decreased aggressive behaviors. Similarly, Brigell’s (2010) study of GBV prevention programs in El Salvador found participatory theatre programs helped performers and audience members deconstruct masculine-associated behaviors of dominance which increased risk of GBV perpetration. These studies highlight the necessity of

prevention through education, as post-IPV interventions are often ineffective (Dutton 2006). By teaching youth *power-with* attitudes and behaviors, they may build stronger relationships and connections with others through trust, respect, communication, and collaboration.

### ***Dancing Classrooms as IPV Provention***

IPV prevention research identifies nine principles of effective prevention programs: (1) *theory driven curriculum*, (2) *comprehensive programming*, (3) *variance in teaching methods*, (4) *sufficient time for impact*, (5) *positive relationship-building*, (6) *appropriately timed*, (7) *socioculturally relevant*, (8) *well-trained staff*, and (9) *outcome evaluation* (Nation et al. 2003; De Grace and Clarke 2012). While this study does not evaluate *Dancing Classrooms* on these principles, the apparent compatibility of *Dancing Classrooms* with the nine principles is too relevant to overlook. Framed within the *Dancing Classrooms* context, the nine principles are demonstrated: (1) reliance on *theory driven curriculum* to improve youth social and emotional learning via the Dulaine Method, (2) *comprehensive programming* which fosters partnership with schools and effectively teaches youth social dance over 10-week residency, (3) integration of dancing, inclusive instruction, and complementary reflection assignments for *variance in teaching methods* (4) allowing *sufficient time for impact* by hosting two 1-hour sessions per week over a 10-week residency, (5) fostering *positive relationship-building* among students, teachers, and Teaching Artists through collaborative social dancing, (6) teaching *appropriately timed* curriculum to secondary education students to enhance prosocial skills, (7) providing *socioculturally relevant* content through culturally responsive-sustaining education (CR-SE), (8) educating youth with *well-trained staff* proficient in the Dulaine Method pedagogy, and (9) achieving *outcome evaluation* by written student reflections and the Culminating Event

showcase. In addition to empowering *power-with* attitudes and behaviors, *Dancing Classrooms* illustrates through the nine principles its compatibility as an IPV prevention program.

### **IPV Provention and SEL**

Resembling *power-with* principles of peace education and IPV protective factors, social and emotional learning (SEL) is about empowering one's agency to confidently navigate challenges, be in control of oneself, and share spaces with others (CASEL 2019; Yoder 2014). While myriad definitions exist for SEL, Jones, Bailey, and Kahn (2019) effectively describe SEL as “the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills required to succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships, and citizenship” (19). This definition appeals to the *proventative* perspective of this research, empowering people to actively practice and embody peace education principles rather than simply learning *about* them. SEL literature is examined with noted intersections between physical education, dance, and SEL development. This interdisciplinary research contributes innovative insights to the respective fields of arts-based peace education, IPV prevention, and SEL development.

### **History of SEL**

Founded in 1994, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) pioneered SEL research by first convening a diverse team of practitioners, scholars, researchers, and child advocates to form an inclusive, comprehensive framework (Elias et al. 1997). Today, over 100 SEL-related frameworks exist that describe and frame SEL differently, leading to variance in research methods and promoted intervention approaches (Garcia 2016; Berg et al. 2017). Despite the myriad SEL frameworks, consensus is generally shared to improve



intrapersonal and interpersonal skills through effective, evidence-based methods that are culturally sensitive (Blyth et al. 2019). Measuring the broad efficacy of SEL programming in the U.S., the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development investigated relevant SEL-research and conclusively found SEL positively affected academic learning and social development of recipients (Jones & Kahn 2017). Within the U.S., at least 18 states have K-12 SEL standards or competencies, and over 200 pieces of SEL-related legislation were present in 2019 (Shriver and Weissberg 2020). For example, *The Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning* (ArtsEdSEL, 2023), founded in 2019, blends New Jersey's Student Learning Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts with CASEL's SEL Framework. All New Jersey's school districts were required to implement the new arts education standards by September 2022. Based on national surveys in the U.S. (Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan 2013), educators largely support SEL as valuable for student success and wellness.

In July 2021, a national online survey sampled 700 educators, administrators, and parents regarding how children's SEL was impacted by COVID-19 (McGraw Hill 2021). Findings show that awareness and support of SEL skills rose in response to the pandemic. Recognizing how Arts Education benefits SEL development, in 2021 the U.S. Department of Education awarded a \$8.5 million grant to four national Connected Arts Networks (CAN) promoting inclusive, equitable access to the Arts, including the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) (Hurlburt 2021). Based on collaborative Arts programming in NYC, the national project aims to establish national best practices for Arts education, national professional resources networks, and effective partnerships between Arts programs and school communities, locally and nationally, by 2026. Based on Global Social and Emotional Learning Industry Market Report, the U.S. market invested an estimated \$703 million in SEL initiatives in 2020, while global investments in SEL

were approximately \$2.4 billion in the same year. The same report projects global SEL investments will increase to \$8.2 billion by 2027 (ReportLinker 2022).

While public endorsement of SEL is steadily increasing, SEL advocates caution overhyping SEL as a one-size-fits-all framework because it requires time to be fruitful and needs to fit local contexts and needs to actualize benefits to youth life skills (Shriver and Weissberg 2020). In response, Transformative SEL emerged which explicitly integrates social justice into SEL to disrupt cycles of violence and injustice, emphasizing broader community empowerment through SEL rather than focusing solely on individual competencies (Rivas-Drake et al. 2021; Jagers, Rivas-Drake, and Williams 2019). Similarly, Emory University’s Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics (CCSCBE) recently debuted their Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning model which they proclaim as “SEL 2.0” (SEE Learning n.d.). Collectively, these models exemplify a core assumption of this study: empowering people by teaching *power-with* attitudes and behaviors can transform social conditions towards *positive peace*. How these *power-with* skills can be achieved is framed with CASEL’s five core skills below.

### **CASEL’s SEL Framework**

Roger Reissberg and Mary O’Brien, key leadership figures at CASEL, note effective SEL programs teach youth ways to express themselves constructively to positively impact their attitudes and behaviors (2004). Documented benefits of SEL include more positive relationship-building (Midford et al. 2016), more cooperative behaviors (Durlak et al. 2011), improving school climate (Hagelskamp, Brackett, Rivers & Salovey 2013; McCormick, Capella, O’Connor, & McClowry 2015), and reduced bullying behaviors (Durlak et al. 2011; Weissberg, Durlak &

Domitrovich 2015). Yanko and Yap (2020) additionally found co-constructivist settings where participants practice reflective listening, agency, and communication supports the development of SEL abilities. CASEL outlines five core skills for SEL: (1) *self-awareness*, (2) *self-management*, (3) *social awareness*, (4) *relationship skills*, and (5) *responsible decision-making*.

*Self-awareness* is an intrapersonal skill involving reflection and understanding of one's emotions, perceptions, and beliefs. Recognizing how internal feelings and attitudes influence external behaviors and interactions helps individuals realize how they may impact themselves, others, and their environment. *Self-Awareness* also empowers people to assess their capabilities and identify personal strengths and areas for growth (CASEL n.d.).

*Self-management* integrates the personal knowledge of *self-awareness* to develop proactive approaches for managing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors rather than reacting without intention or consideration. Building trust, confidence, and resiliency within oneself helps ensure external behaviors reflect internal feelings and attitudes. Additionally, *self-management* aids individuals in achieving goals and remaining motivated when plans need to be adjusted rather than abandoning the goals (CASEL n.d.).

*Social Awareness* builds upon *self-awareness* and *self-management* by recognizing other people experience intrapersonal situations and dilemmas as well. Extended further, *social awareness* helps people recognize how their behavior towards others positively or negatively impacts the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of others. Additionally, *social awareness* acknowledges everyone, including oneself, carries unique lived experiences that should be considered and respected. Empathy, accountability, consideration, and compassion are all values embedded with the *social awareness* skill (CASEL n.d.).

*Relationship Skills* encapsulates communication, trust-building, inclusivity, and effective responses for resolving conflict with others. Genuinely connecting with other people, participating in inclusive discussions, and being mutually considerate and accountable to each other builds trust and meaningful relationships. Building *relationship skills* encourages effective resolutions of conflict through constructive dialogues while also reducing conflict by minimizing misperceptions due to poor communication and unshared expectations (CASEL n.d.).

*Responsible Decision-making* empowers individuals to thoughtfully recognize all perspectives of a situation before responding. Furthermore, *responsible decision-making* encourages all voices to be included when seeking solutions that address problems that arise. With a collaborative, *power-with* mentality, people can collectively pool their individual strengths (e.g., knowledge, social skills, technical expertise, etc.) for the collective benefit of all (CASEL n.d.).

### **SEL and Arts-based Peace Education**

Promising connections between SEL development and youth dance education have been revealed in recent research (Pereira & Marques-Pinto 2018; Yanko, Matt, and Yap 2020; Calçada and Gilham 2022). For example, in Calçada and Gilham's (2022) recent literature review of dance-based SEL education, they report students' sense of belonging (Kreutzmann et al. 2018), social skills (Masadis et al. 2019), socioemotional competencies (Archbell et al. 2019), social engagement (Nelson et al. 2017), and social-emotional development (Rajan & Aker 2020) all improved from programming. Additionally, violence-related behaviors were reduced (Koshland et al. 2004) and student learning accelerated over the course of dance programming

(Golding et al. 2016). Collectively, these findings support dance-based education as an effective teaching tool (Sharma et al. 2020).

Investigating how arts-education and SEL learning transfer values and skills, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) identify several interlinked mechanisms that affect transference of values, including self-expression, positive risk-taking, and shared empathy. While no specific predictability or direction of these interlinked mechanisms was identified in the study's findings, a follow-up study funded by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), Hafeli and Horowitz (2017) identified dance as one of several effective arts-based modes for SEL transference. Arts-based SEL transference research by Hafeli and Horowitz (2017) also found positive attitudes expressed by instructors significantly benefitted student learning, supporting previous research connecting teacher excitement for teaching content with student receptivity for learning content (Unsworth 1990). These findings suggest interpersonal social skills practiced in dance effectively transfer SEL skills, especially when dancers receive positive, encouraging support from their instructor.

While this dissertation presents social dance as an innovative form of IPV prevention, SEL research already links positive connections between movement-based activities with SEL development. Most notably, Cooperative Learning (CL) is a physical education framework promoting youth SEL development through small group activities (Casey and Fernandez-Rio 2019; Cohen 1994; Slavin 2010). Dyson and Casey (2016) identify five key features of CL: (1) promotion of *positive interdependence* among youth, (2) youth education about *individual accountability* for self and others, (3) facilitators *promote face-to-face interaction*, (4) effective development of *interpersonal skills and small group skills*, and (5) practice of *group processing* about experiences. Based on a two-year study of four New Zealand primary schools, Dyson,

Howley, and Shen (2021) found students perceived CL instruction benefited their SEL skills by *being part of a team, learning how to listen, helping and encouraging others, and making physical education fair*. Additionally, research shows CL is effective for promoting prosocial behaviors, including empathy and inclusion (Dyson, Linehan, and Hastie 2010; Polvi and Telama 2000; Yoder 1993). These findings mirror previously mentioned SEL transference benefits of dance and demonstrate how *Dancing Classrooms* empowers *power-with* relationships which promote *positive peace* and IPV protective factors.

### **Youth IPV Provention and SEL**

Empowering youth towards *power-with* attitudes and behaviors is favorable because teaching SEL skills to youth is an ideal time (Denham, Brown, and Domitrovich 2011), especially via arts-based SEL programming (Rooney 2004). More recent studies of CL in K-12 settings indicate efficacy for shifting youth attitudes about gender-associated discrimination to be more inclusive and fairer (Sánchez-Hernández et al. 2018). These findings seem intuitive because SEL's emphasis on prosocial, *power-with* behaviors overlaps with the IPV protective factors. Unfortunately, research on youth SEL development and IPV prevention is scarce at the time of this writing. Cahill et al. (2019) note SEL and GBV prevention programming infrequently intersects because variance in theories and research methodologies present challenges that complicate cohesive assessment and generalizability of findings. However, they note the Australian-based "Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships" SEL and GBV-prevention program as an exemplary initiative demonstrating positive benefits of SEL with GBV-prevention. Similar GBV-prevention research reports teaching and applying SEL skills through interactive programming shifts GBV-related attitudes (Ball 2013) and reduces GBV among

youth (DeGue et al. 2014). This study contributes innovative insights by examining *Dancing Classrooms* as an interdisciplinary program promoting peace education, SEL development, and IPV prevention simultaneously.

## **Discussion**

This chapter demonstrates how IPV overlaps and expands beyond GBV to critically address the underlying sociocultural attitudes justifying *power-over* behaviors in all intimate relationships. IPV inclusively identifies violence against men and in LGBTQ+ relationships, forms of violence historically overlooked in GBV. Discussion of risk factors and IPVA assessments reveal how patriarchal, sociocultural values promote “masculine” *power-over* attitudes which may manifest into IPV by any person regardless of gender. To effectively address risk factors and attitudes, empowerment of *power-with* protective factors are needed for sustainable change and *positive peace*. The movement-arts present a space for positive expression and transformation of attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. Effective prevention principles are noted, with direct connections made with *Dancing Classrooms* principles and program design.

Research on Cooperative Learning finds physical education programs promoting *interdependence, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal skill development, and individual accountability* effectively promote SEL development (Casey and Fernandez-Rio 2019; Cohen 1994; Slavin 2010; Dyson and Carey 2016). While Cooperative Learning research mainly focuses on team-based sports and does not emphasize dance, the interdependent nature of social dance is expected to achieve similar SEL benefits. This is demonstrated by *Dancing Classrooms*’ inclusive instruction and collaborative social dance model which conveniently aligns with Cooperative Learning principles indicating it is a good match for achieving SEL goals (Jacobs

and Wright 2014). Furthermore, SEL's five core skills demonstrate prosocial, *power-with* attitudes that align with IPV protective factors, implying SEL development decreases IPV risk factors. In the following chapter, the *Dancing Classrooms* model and pedagogy is theoretically examined using Intergroup Contact Theory to further explain how the program potentially benefits SEL skills and IPV protective factors. In conjunction with SEL development and Intergroup Contact Theory, this study frames *Dancing Classrooms* as an exemplary program for arts-based peace education and IPV prevention.



## CHAPTER 5: Intergroup Contact Theory

In *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport (1954) notes how prejudice attitudes about members of “Other” groups often manifests into antisocial behaviors, ranging from indirect actions (e.g., avoiding interaction, talking about someone to others) to direct forms of violence (e.g., discriminatory exclusion, physical violence). Attempting to alleviate prejudice among members of different “groups” (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, etc.), Allport (1954) proposed relationships may positively shift through an Intergroup Contact framework where people co-experience events and activities to replace negative perceptions with positive connections. Emerging when racism and sexism were socialized and normative, Allport’s framework offered a transformative approach for building peace through positive contact.

However, merely bringing people into “contact” together does not guarantee positive shifts, and may instigate negative shifts in the relationship, especially when a negative history is shared among participants. For example, Smith’s (1994) study of racial-based prejudices among two biracial private neighborhoods found merely bringing people together evoked unrest and conflict between community members who shared historical conflict with each other. This was similarly demonstrated by the Robber’s Cave experiment (Sherif et al. 1961), where simple “contact” with others lacked sufficient conditions to improve relationships among participants (Stephan 1987). To achieve ideal conditions, Allport (1954) advised activities to integrate several key features: (1) *adequate frequency and duration of activities for participants to experience multiple positive interactions*, (2) *promote equal status among participants*, (3) *foster cooperative contact through shared goals*, (4) *provide a supportive environment*, and (5) *encourage genuine motivation among participants to participate*. Thomas Pettigrew (1998) later

updated Allport's fifth feature into *opportunity for friendship* to reflect social motivations of belonging, acceptance, and meaningful relationship-building, which this study utilizes.

### **Conditions for Positive Contact**

Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) remains actively researched for planning and understanding positive relationship transformations (Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux 2005). Others similarly endorse positive relationship shifts through *positive contact* among participants by (1) establishing *equal status* among participants by averting any socially hierarchical attitudes (Scharzwald, Amir, & Crain 1992), (2) encouraging genuine *personal interaction* among members (Cook 1985; Schofield 1978), (3) role-modeling of prosocial, *supportive norms* by facilitator (Stephan & Rosenfield 1982), and (4) promoting *cooperation* among participants for mutual goal attainment (Gaertner, Dovidio, Rust et al. 1999). For example, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found in a meta-analysis of 713 independent samples across 515 studies that ICT typically reduces intergroup prejudice, benefits relationships beyond the originally devised scope of racial and ethnic encounters, and ICT conditions are best conceptualized as an interrelated bundle rather than as independent factors. And yet, even when all optimal conditions for positive intergroup contact are not met, research finds that partial conditions still retain positive influence potential on interpersonal relationships and prejudice reduction (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). Recent Intergroup Contact Theory research also indicates ICT effectively raises mutual understanding of members, reduces uncertainty through trust-building, and builds empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp 2008) when members are brought together as one group (Brown & Hewstone 2005). Contemporary ICT conditions are outlined for clarity followed by a theoretical application of ICT with *Dancing Classrooms* program design and pedagogy.

### ***Condition 1: Adequate Frequency and Duration of Activities***

Contact research reveals *time* is crucial for improving relationships, as a single interaction does not effectively shift relationships and attitudes because there is insufficient time to work through anxious emotions and stress associated with meeting another person (Wilder & Thompson 1980). The more regularly people come together the more they can build rapport and trust that mitigates anxiety and uncertainty. In a meta-analysis of 515 contact theory studies involving over half a million people around the world, Pettigrew and Tropp (2000, 2006) found positive meetings held face-to-face over time effectively improved interpersonal relationship building among participants. Additionally, Marinucci and colleagues (2021) describe close, meaningful interactions which build trust over time as “intimate contact” experiences. Contrasted with casual contact, intimate contact experiences are the ideal form of contact for reducing prejudice and building positive interpersonal relationships (Paolini et al. 2021; Fuochi et al. 2020) promoting deeper interpersonal connections than casual contact (Pettigrew 1997; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Consent and voluntary participation are rooted in intimate contact to promote inclusivity, mutual enjoyment, and cooperation of members (Islam and Hewstone 1993). Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1997) endorse this form of long-term, frequent contact as significantly contributing to ICT. While some people may be reluctant to participate in intimate contact with others due to uncertainty and prejudice (Maunder et al. 2019), research indicates those participants still benefit from having close contact experiences with others (Turner et al. 2020). This retained benefit of intimate and close contact demonstrates the importance of consent and safety when interacting with others, further reflecting the benefits of ICT approaches. Therefore, to overcome initial

anxieties of meeting others, programs must allow sufficient time for anxious emotions to dissipate in favor of familiarity and trust to begin building relationships (Kenworthy et al. 2005).

### **Condition 2 & 3: *Equal Status and Supportive Leadership***

This section presents *equal status among members* and *supportive leadership* together to reflect the school-based context of this research where youth social skills are empowered and role-modeled by classrooms teachers and teaching artists. To avoid antisocial, *power-over* behaviors (e.g., insults, physical harm, discrimination) which damage trust and harm relationships, it is important participants interact respectfully and inclusively with each other (Riordan & Riggiero 1980). *Equal status among members* occurs when all participants practice *power-with* attitudes and behaviors with each other while avoiding *power-over* attitudes and behaviors rooted in social dominance of one group(s) over another. Through role-modeling and empowering instruction, instructors demonstrate *supportive leadership* by interacting inclusively with students to establish and maintain a safe environment for positive contact. Youth-centered ICT is particularly valuable because youth of different backgrounds tend to self-segregate in middle and later adolescence (McKeown et al. 2016) making intergroup connections less stable (Turner & Cameron 2016) and less likely to form (Wölfer & Hewstone, 2018). Additionally, ICT may positively shift youth attitudes about various social groups, such as ethnic groups and LBQTQ+ peoples, through *supportive leadership* which encourages participant engagement and models positive interpersonal behaviors (Vonofakou et al. 2007; Grütter and Tropp 2019; Harwood et al. 2005; Heinze and Horn 2009; Turner, Hodson, and Dhont 2020).

#### ***Condition 4: Cooperative Contact Through Shared Goals***

Overlapping with Allport's (1954/1979) concepts of Contact and Acquaintance Programs, Stephan and Stephan (2005) identified Cooperative Learning Groups as an effective means for promoting "the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups" (281) through interdependent, face-to-face activities. Similarly, Johnson and Johnson's (1989) meta-analysis of 53 cooperative and competitive learning approaches found cooperative programming developed stronger intergroup friendships than competitive participants. In follow-up studies, Johnson and Johnson (1992, 2000) reported cooperative techniques promoted greater cross-cultural friendships than competitive programming, supporting Slavin's (1995) findings that cooperative learning more positively impacts intergroup friendships than competitive learning. Aligning with *transformative* principles in peace education, it is clear cooperative endeavors pursuing mutual success for all participants are most effective for improving interpersonal attitudes, behaviors, and relationships (Worchel 1986).

#### ***Condition 5: Opportunity for Friendship***

*Opportunity for friendship*, underscores how relationships built on trust are likely to become friendships and positive bonds that shift previously held views (Tropp 2008). For example, Hewstone and colleagues (2006) found Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants who experienced violence during The Troubles were more willingness to forgive and trust the other after positive interpersonal contact. Trust also involves feeling safe with and genuinely care for by others (Tyler 2001; Stephan & Stephan 2000), while trust is less likely in relationships defined by hierarchical status and asymmetrical power (Kramer & Messick 1998). Trust must be earned through goodwill, genuine effort, and positive interpersonal experiences (Tropp 2008).

Forcing or demanding people to be unconditionally trusting of other people is unsustainable, especially in contexts of social conflict (Kramer and Messick 1998). Building positive relationships and associations with other people does not necessarily mean people will assume trust with others of similar social identities (Cohen & Steele 2002; Ervin 2001; Tropp 2006), however, the *power-with* attitudes and behaviors cultivated through *friendship* with other people remain effective for approaching new social situations with confidence. Research also finds intimate contact benefits participants' attitudes and behaviors toward romantic partners (Van Laar et al. 2008), reaffirming how building trust between people is significant for improving interpersonal relationships, intimate or otherwise. C

### **ICT and Arts-based Peace Education**

Partnered social dance is an opportunity for dance partners to share physical and emotional closeness that may foster meaningful connections and collaborative relationships, which Julia Ericksen (2011) calls “instant intimacy” (22). Describing what makes a “good” dance partner, Vidrin (2019) notes *clear communication, transparent intent, collaborative behaviors, and being accountable for actions* are all essential skills cultivated in partner dancing. Other scholars note, participants may build positive relationships as well as a collective sense of belonging by collaborating for mutual enjoyment of the dance (Bramley and Jermyn 2006; Fensham and Garner 2005). Much of the existing dance pedagogy research investigating creative movement with children highlights several qualities of effective programming that overlap with ICT conditions, including (1) building a sense of safety and belonging among youth participants (*equal status among members, opportunity for friendship*), (2) inclusively encouraging students (*supportive leadership*), (3) setting clear expectations of movement material, and (4) establishing

a *power-with* relationship among students as well as with their teacher (*equal status among members, cooperative contact through shared goals*) (Mosston and Ashworth 1986; McNeil 1995; Kupperts 2007; Connolly et al. 2011; Castle et al. 2002; Urmston 2012). While *Dancing Classrooms* is not a creative movement program, it achieves creative movement goals by meeting ICT conditions via the *Dulaine Method* and teaching inclusively adapting content to meet participants' needs.

Pringle (2002, 2008) notes most movement-based Arts educators and instructors favor co-constructive, *power-with* relationships with their students instead of authoritative, *power-over* relationships, and that arts educators embody and role-model these values in their instruction and feedback with students (*supportive leadership*). Facilitative artists empower youth to be co-learners in the process which enhances student-instructor relationships. Furthermore, Lynch and Allan's (2006) study of secondary-school youth found that students appreciated dance instructors because they "talk to you like an ordinary person" (27). The alignments of dance pedagogy principles and ICT conditions reaffirm this study's application of ICT with *Dancing Classrooms* and, more specifically, the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy.

### **ICT and *Dancing Classrooms***

As outlined in Chapter 2, *Dancing Classrooms* utilizes the *Dulaine Method* framework for consistency and structure across all *Dancing Classrooms* sites. Complementing analyses of *Dancing Classrooms*' impact on SEL and IPV attitudes, *Dancing Classrooms* programming and the *Dulaine Method* is assessed using the ICT model to provide a theoretical explanation for 'how' *Dancing Classrooms* positively affects participant attitudes and behaviors. Like previous dance pedagogy research findings, theoretical analysis of *Dancing Classrooms* using ICT reveals

alignments that are analyzed in Chapter 8. The theoretical evaluation of *Dancing Classrooms* programming reveals satisfaction of all ICT conditions, indicating a high likelihood of positive contact and improved *power-with* attitudes and behaviors for participants.

Providing two weekly 1-hour classes over ten consecutive weeks, *Dancing Classrooms* adequately achieves the first condition for ICT: *adequate frequency and duration of activities for participants to experience multiple positive interactions*. Additionally, standardization of the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy and dance curriculum helps Teaching Artists instruct efficiently during their one-hour classes. The second condition, *equal status among members*, is achieved by Teaching Artists role-modeling and guiding students to practice prosocial, *power-with* behaviors that foster empathy, mutual understanding, open communication, and collaborative decision-making (i.e., *Creating a Safe Space* and *Respect and Compassion*). Furthermore, Teaching Artists utilize several effective pedagogical approaches, such as providing structured expectations to empower students' dance proficiency and self-confidence (*Command and Control*), staying aware of students' experiences and needs (*Being Present*), empowering students with mindful (non)verbal language (*Language – Body and Verbal*), and fostering a fun, non-judgmental space of expression and experiment of movement (i.e., *Humor and Joy*) – all clearly representing the third ICT condition of *supportive leadership*. All the while, students are collaborating with partners to coordinate movements and improve proficiency in various dance styles which are debuted during the non-competitive Culminating Event showcase. While preparing for the showcase fulfills the fourth condition, *cooperative contact through mutual goals*, collaboratively practicing movements and gaining coordinated proficiency represented shared goals experienced each class. All the while, participants have many *opportunities for*



*friendship* over the 10-week program by co-experiencing *power-with* interactions, collaborative achievements, and mutual enjoyment of dancing with others.

## **Discussion**

For greatest positive impact, programs must promote equality among members, provide intentional structure of interactions, encourage *power-with* interactions, create an enjoyable environment for shared activities, and establish a team dynamic among participants (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998). Contact research asserts that *positive contact* is necessary, as merely making “contact” with people does not guarantee a positive shift in relationships. Application of the ICT framework to *Dancing Classrooms* revealed the *Dulaine Method* strongly aligns with effective dance pedagogy practices for building *positive contact* among participants. Based on these observations, it follows that *Dancing Classrooms* programming promotes *positive contact* among participants by empowering *power-with* attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. While this study primarily examines *Dancing Classrooms*’ effect on SEL and IPV attitudes, a theoretical analysis is conducted in Chapter 8 that measures key features of ICT using structural coding. Alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive Program Directors described the *Dulaine Method* using ICT-related terms for each of the five conditions, supporting this study’s assertion that the *Dulaine Method* promotes positive interpersonal behaviors and relationship building by closely aligning, unintentionally, with ICT conditions. Further, the majority of alumni expressed their *Dancing Classrooms* positively impacted their social skills and negatively impacted IPV attitudes. These findings contribute meaningful insights about positive relationship-building conditions to the small yet expanding field of arts-based peace education.

## Chapter 6: Mixed Methods and Measures

Social and emotional learning (SEL) literature commonly emphasizes the benefits of SEL on academic performance with K-12 public school settings, often overlooking the invaluable life skills of SEL, such as interpersonal communication and emotional wellbeing (Lindsay, 2013). Supporting research posits social and emotional learning positively impacts social behaviors, which may increase personal accountability, decrease interpersonal conflicts, and improve critical thinking skills (Arslan & Demirtas, 2016; CASEL, 2003; Elder, 1997 Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Lindsay, 2013; Siegel, 2005; Stedman & Andenoro, 2007; Zins & Elias, 2007). Similarly, arts-based peace education blends physical movement, emotional expression, and interpersonal cooperation to support the “[c]onscious interdependency” (p. 348) of students to transform the environment and themselves rather than being dependent on others for understanding and action (Hart, 1979).

This mixed methods study contributes to arts-based peace education literature by researching experiences of Dancing Classrooms alumni in relation to their SEL skills development and IPVAS-related attitudes. My methodical approach is outlined as follows: (1) theoretical framing of research question and hypotheses, (2) listing of relevant variables, (3) research design overview, (4) summarization of pilot study pre-tests, (5) summary of data collection and analyses, (6) limitations of study, and (7) anticipated findings.

### **Research Questions & Hypotheses**

Conventional wisdom links intimate-partner violence (IPV) to engendered social behaviors which enculturate asymmetrical *dominance-based* power relationships wherein it is “acceptable” for one group, often men, to have more power, influence, and authority than other group(s)

(Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This socializes a “power-over” mindset for *in-group* members which normalizes the subjugation of *out-group* members by disregarding their agency through abuse, control, and violence. Strict gender norms promoting greater power to men over women exemplify asymmetrical in-group/out-group dynamic of “power over” which are enculturated at a young age (CDC, n.d.)

Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) posits that relationships between perceived *in-group/out-group* members may be improved when certain conditions are fulfilled during co-experienced activities (Allport, 1954). Co-experienced activities which promote collaborative decision-making (e.g., playing sports, dancing together, performing theatre) may transform asymmetrical, “power-over” relationships into “power-with” relationships through positive, constructive interpersonal communication behaviors. Social and emotional learning (SEL) skills are strongly associated with “power-with” interpersonal behaviors, affirming that SEL-development programs are invaluable for building safer interpersonal relationships and communities by transforming social identities, attitudes, and behaviors.

*Dancing Classrooms* is an exemplar program which teaches students to embody “power with” relationships by blending social dance training with SEL skill development. Following the *Dulaine Method* of instruction, *Dancing Classrooms* Teaching Artists guide students to explore, communicate, express, and enjoy the process of sharing space and being connected with others (Dulaine, 2016). During this process, students build “power with” relationships through expansion of their SEL capacities, inherently reducing “power-over” behaviors associated with IPV, such as abuse, control, and violence. Thus, while not explicitly designed as an IPV-prevention program, *Dancing Classrooms* demonstrates qualities of arts-based peace education by developing positive, interpersonal skills which encourages youth to embody “power with”

behaviors in their present and future relationships, leading to safer relationships and communities.

Using insights from Intergroup Contact Theory to examine the experiences of Dancing Classrooms alumni and their perceived impact of the program, I examine two core research questions in this dissertation:

- *Does arts-based peace education strengthen social skills?*
- *Does arts-based peace education reduce IPV-related attitudes?*

Within the context of *Dancing Classrooms*, I adapt and address the core research questions by assessing the following:

- *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted the development of their SEL skills?*
- *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted their IPV-related attitudes?*

An implicit assumption within this research is that prosocial, interpersonal communication skills will correlate into prosocial attitudes that value collaboration over coercion. Studies on IPV correlate positive attitudes toward *abuse, control, and violence* with a higher risk of IPV behaviors between partners (Fincham et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2005). In contrast, protective factors reducing IPV behaviors include “emotional health and connectedness,” “empathy and concern for how one’s actions affect others,” and “stable, positive relationships with others” (CDC, n.d.). While not specifically addressing IPV, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and

Emotional Learning (CASEL) similarly asserts SEL skills “contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities” (n.d., n.p.) through *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, and *responsible decision-making*. This implies increasing SEL skill development simultaneously increases IPV protective factors, reducing IPV-related attitudes as a result.

Thus, the hypotheses guiding this study are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive high impact on SEL skill-development.
  - a. Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *self-awareness* skills.
  - b. Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *self-management* skills.
  - c. Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *social awareness* skills.
  - d. Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *relationship* skills.
  - e. Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of *responsible decision-making* skills.
- Hypothesis 2: Individuals with high SEL skills will report low IPV-related attitudes.
  - a. Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *abuse-related* attitudes.
  - b. Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *control-related* attitudes.
  - c. Individuals with high SEL skills will report low *violence-related* attitudes.

## **Key Variables**

Aligning with the research question and related hypotheses, I measure the following key variables:

**Dependent Variables (DV):** SEL Skills (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) and IPVAS-R factors (*abuse, violence, control*)

### Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is an individual's capacity to process their emotions, thoughts, and values, and acknowledge how their attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives are influenced in various situations. This involves self-reflection of one's motives and willingness to be vulnerably honest with oneself in identifying biases and assumptions that frame their perceptions (CASEL, n.d.).

### Self-Management

Self-Management is an individual's capacity to make decisions that constructively navigate their emotions, thoughts, and perspectives in various situations. Informed by one's Self-Awareness, this characteristic reflects how someone handles stress, how they develop and maintain discipline and motivation, how they set and achieve goals, and how they assert their agency for themselves as well as with others (CASEL, n.d.).

### Social Awareness

Social Awareness is an individual's capacity to empathetically understand the perceptions and perspectives of others regardless of culture, background, or context. This characteristic

demonstrates a willingness to compassionately connect with other people to understand their lived experiences, and thoughtfully treat them in an interconnected, interdependent way (CASEL, n.d.).

### Relationship Skills

Relationship Skills are the capacities an individual has to communicate effectively and collaboratively with others to constructively navigate conflicts while also building lasting, positive relationships. Closely related to Self-Management and Responsible Decision-making, this category represents a range of interpersonal communication skills and behaviors that, ideally, positively improve relationships and communities (CASEL, n.d.).

### Responsible Decision-making

Responsible Decision-making is the capacity to assess the ethical and moral benefits and consequences in various contexts and settings prior to making a decision. This characteristic demonstrates curiosity, humility, and integrity in making informed and conscionable decisions that impact oneself and others (CASEL, n.d.).

### Abuse

Abuse refers to behaviors which inflict verbal and psychological harm to oneself or others. Threats, emotional manipulation, blaming, and public insults are examples of abusive behavior measured in this study (Fincham et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2005).

### Control

Control is the restriction of another person's agency to make independent decisions. Forbidding communication and activities with people of opposite genders and requiring a detailed account of a person's daily activities are forms of controlling behavior measured in this study (Fincham et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2005).

### Violence

Violence refers to physical harm inflicted on oneself or another person. Kicking, biting, hitting, damaging personal belongings, and physically threatening harm with an object or weapon are forms of violence measured in this study (Fincham et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2005).

**Independent Variables (IV):** Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms Participation on SEL Skill Development and SEL Skills

### **Control Variables**

There are significant limitations to these assertions due to the lack of a control group and the variance in time among alumni completion of the Dancing Classrooms program. In addition to using the sequential explanatory design to partially remedy internal validity limitations, I included the following control factors to further increase this study's internal validity: (1) participant predisposition to dancing, (2) year(s) of program participation, (3) participant involvement in a dance-related profession, and (4) participation in any *Dancing Classrooms* programming outside of the standard 10-week programming.

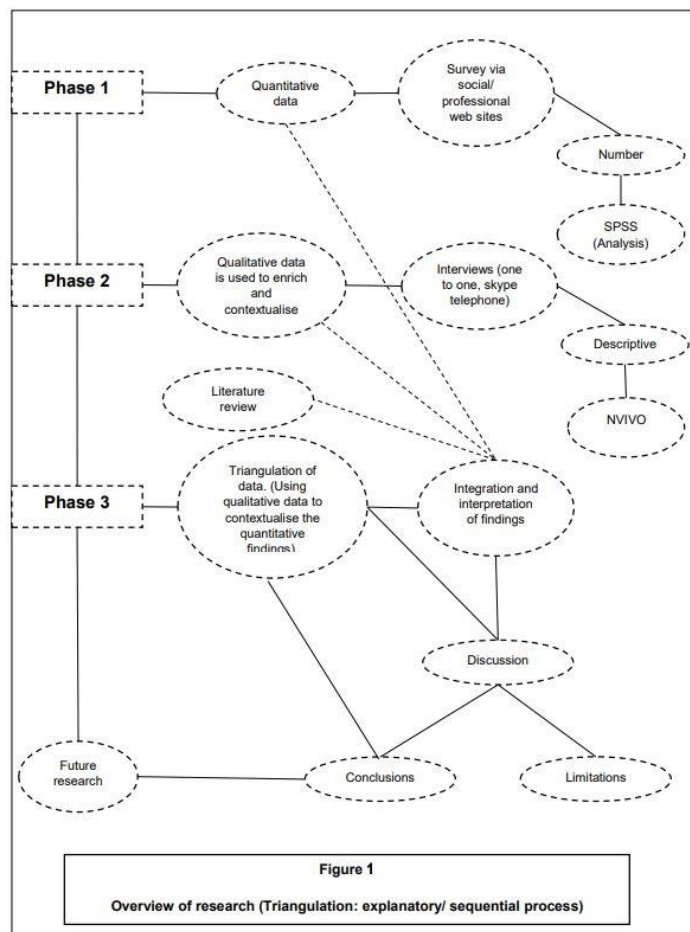


## Demographic Comparison Variables

The survey includes the following demographic variables: (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) gender identity, and (d) sexual orientation. These variables are analyzed to explore trends, both individually and intersectionality, within participant responses (e.g., comparing how male and female identifying participants may perceive IPV-attitudes across different races/ethnicities and sexualities). Future research can supplement demographic gaps in this limited list by accounting for additional factors, such as religion and nationality.

## Sequential Explanatory Research Design

This mixed-methods research project uses quantitative and qualitative approaches as part of a sequential explanatory design (Bowen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2009). Lacking a comparable control group for measuring Dancing Classrooms’ programmatic impact over 26 years, I attempt to control for differences in key variables by analyzing participants’ *perceived impact* of Dancing Classrooms on their development of five core SEL categories (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*). Using several established scales measuring the five core SEL categories (ex. *social awareness* is measured by *empathy and compassion*,



*perspective taking*, and *understanding social context skills*; see Appendix A), I modified CASEL’s “Personal SEL Reflection Tool” (2021) to additionally measure participants’ *perceived impact* of Dancing Classrooms on their development of each SEL scale category. Mean values of each *perceived impact* scale item were averaged together to calculate the *perceived impact of* each of the five core SEL categories (*self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, *responsible decision-making*). Based on the 5-point Likert scale, I coded participants’ *perceived impact* into *high perceived impact* (greater than or equal to 4.00) and *low perceived impact* (less than or equal to 2.00) for scale categories to simulate a comparison group within the sample. Responses between 2.00 and 4.00 are coded *undetermined impact*, reflecting participant averages did not at least Agree (coded as “4”) or Disagree (coded as “2”) on Dancing Classrooms’ impact on SEL skill development. I use these three categories (*high perceived impact*, *low perceived impact*, *undetermined impact*) for one-way ANOVAs for measuring variance within each scale category result. To address internal validity of findings, I use a sequential explanatory design (Bowen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2009) to analyze alumni *perceived impact of Dancing Classrooms’* impact on their SEL development and IPV-related attitudes through a three-phase model of (1) quantitative metrics, (2) qualitative analysis, and (3) triangulating findings with established literature to enhance internal validity for testing research questions and hypotheses (see Figure 1; Bowen et al., 2017, p13).

## **Data Collection**

The following section outlines the sequential explanatory design (Bowen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2009) being used to analyze alumni perceptions of *Dancing Classrooms’* impact on SEL development and IPV-related attitudes. This three-phase model involves (1) quantitative metrics,

(2) qualitative analysis, and (3) triangulation of Phase One and Two findings with established literature to enhance internal validity for testing research questions and hypotheses.

### **Phase One: Quantitative Design**

Using validity-tested measurement tools, a 25–30-minute Qualtrics survey was circulated to alumni by the *Dancing Classrooms* Alumni Coordinator (Eva) and Social Media Manager (Marielle) through email ListServes, official social media accounts, and snowball sampling via word-of-mouth. The Qualtrics survey remained open from May 31, 2022, until July 31, 2022, and included a prompt asking participants if they are interested in sharing their *Dancing Classrooms* experience during Phase Two (interviews/focus groups).

#### Electronic Survey (Quantitative Tool)

Electronic Surveys contained two self-assessments: a modified 85-item SEL “Personal SEL Reflection Tool” (Appendix A) and a 20-item IPVAS-R Self-assessment (Appendix B). Developed for adults by CASEL, the “Personal SEL Reflection Tool” asks various questions related to the five SEL skills, such as “I am able to name my emotions in the moment” (Appendix A, page 185). Similarly, the IPVAS-R Self-assessment measures participant’s IPVA based on responses to prompts, such as “As long as my partner doesn’t hurt me, ‘threats’ are excused” (Appendix B). In addition, the survey has manipulation checks for (1) participant predisposition to dancing, (2) year(s) of program participation, (3) participant involvement in a dance-related profession, and (4) participation in any *Dancing Classrooms* programming outside of the standard 10-week programming.

## **Pilot Survey**

Being this project utilizes two distinct scales, the SEL Self-Assessment (designed for adults in public school settings) and the IPVAS-R Self-Assessment (designed for university students), I first tested the scale items to evaluate their internal validity, reliability, and variance.

### **Pilot Survey Recruitment**

The sample for the pilot survey included undergraduate students at Kennesaw State University, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest public university in Georgia. I coordinated with five university instructors<sup>1</sup> for assistance in distributing the 30-minute online pilot survey for their students to voluntarily complete. Instructors independently offered additional academic credit to incentivize student participation. Participants provided their first name and the name of their instructor at the beginning of the online survey. At the end of data collection, I emailed instructors participation lists of their respective students to grant their arranged incentive. While the pilot sample is not representative of the DC population, participant responses were invaluable in testing the internal validity, reliability, and variance of survey scale items.

### **Data Collection**

Pilot survey data was collected via KSU Qualtrics software between April 26, 2022, and May 9, 2022. Within the sample, ages ranged from 17 to 62 years old with a mean age of 20.81 years old. 182 students (92%) were younger than 23 years old, which is expected for undergraduate courses. Race/ethnic identities represented within the sample were Caucasian (92 – 45.8%), Black/African American (62– 30.8%), Hispanic/Latin (17– 8.5%), Pacific/South Asian (10–

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<sup>1</sup> Warm thanks to Volker C. Franke, Ph.D., Priscilla Adebayo, Jean Marc Akakpo, Ph.D., Taylor Downes, and David Gethings, Ph.D for their support with pilot study recruitment.

5%), and Multiracial/Multiethnic (13– 6.5%). Prominent gender identities within the sample were Cisgender Males (79 – 39.3%) and Cisgender Females (118 – 58.7%), and prominent sexual orientations within the sample were Heterosexual (159 – 79.1%) and Bisexual/Pansexual (22 – 10.9%). Participants were recruited from courses in Peace and Conflict, Political Science, and American Government at KSU. Majors and Minors of participants were not recorded. Data was imported and cleaned for SPSS analysis. Demographics were recoded into numerical categories (e.g., Caucasian as “1”) and incomplete submissions were removed.

### Survey Scoring

Even though the independent variable (Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms) could not be tested within the context of the pilot sample, I successfully pre-tested reliability scoring of the following scales. Each of the five core SEL skills (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) contain three embedded scales composed of 3-5 scale items each. Similarly, the IPVAS-R scale has three core characteristics (*abuse, violence, control*) composed of 4-8 scale items each. While all SEL scale items are unidirectional, the IPVAS-R scale is bi-direction which requires items from *abuse* (Q88, Q90), *violence* (Q99, Q100, Q102, Q105), and *control* (Q87, Q92, Q95) to be reverse scored (i.e., inverting numerical scores of high and low). Within the IPVAS-R *control* scale, items were grouped into “behaviors by partner” (Q86, Q87, Q92) and “behaviors by self” (Q95, Q98, Q101) to increase reliability of scale items.

### Internal Reliability Testing

I analyzed the Cronbach's Alpha score of pilot data within each scale (ex. Q1-Q7 for Emotional Self Awareness) to determine the degree of internal reliability among scale items and to identify removable items which would increase internal reliability of the scale. *Emotional Self-Awareness* (.815), *Growth Mindset and Purpose* (.772), *Managing Emotions* (.779), *Motivation, Agency, and Goal-setting* (.764), *Empathy and Compassion* (.877), *Perspective Taking* (.878), *Understanding Social Context* (.874), *Communication* (.763), *Building Relationships and Teamwork* (.822), *Conflict Management* (.743), *Problem Analysis* (.799), *Identifying Solutions* (.828), *Reflection on Impact* (.865), and *Abuse* (.905) scales yielded Cronbach's Alphas above the .7 threshold, indicating sufficient internal reliability among items within corresponding scales. *Identity and Self Knowledge* (.594), *Planning and Organization* (.659), *Violence* (.699), and *Control* (.585) yielded Cronbach's Alphas below the .7 threshold, indicating lower internal reliability of scale items. This may be due to social desirability or participant bias inherent in the selective sample of undergrad students attending Peace and Conflict, Political Science, and American Government courses.

### Variability Testing

I prepared data for one-way ANOVA pre-tests by averaging each participants' Likert scale responses per scale item. Treating Likert scale responses as interval variables rather than ordinal variables, I calculated mean scores for each respondent for each scale to produce a mean-of-means, or "scale score", for each category to reflect the average response scoring (ex. mean values of Q1-Q7 were averaged together to calculate the Emotional Self Awareness "scale score"). I compared scale scores across demographic variables (*age, race/ethnicity, gender*

*identity, sexual orientation*) to pre-test variability. ANOVA results suggest SEL and IPVAS scores do not differ significantly across age (“Traditional” 17-22 years old; “Nontraditional” 23 years and older) and race groups (“Black/African American”, “White/Caucasian”, and “Other”). ANOVA results suggest SEL and IPVAS-Violence scores do not differ across gender identities (“Cisgender Male”, “Cisgender Female”, “Other”), yet IPVAS-Abuse ( $p < .001$ ) and IPVAS-Control ( $p < .001$ ) scores significantly differed across gender identities. Besides SEL-Self-Awareness ( $p = .001$ ) and SEL-Self-Management ( $p = .020$ ) scores significantly differing across sexual orientations (“Heterosexual” and “Other”), no other SEL and IPVAS factors differed in ANOVA results. ANOVA results revealed minimal variance within the sample based on demographic categories, which is expected of the sample population. Several demographics lacked enough data to form at least three categories for one-way ANOVAs, limiting the accuracy of variability. Despite sample limitations, Control ( $p < .001$ ) and Abuse ( $p < .001$ ) were significantly different across gender groups. After pre-testing, I finalized the survey design and distributed it on May 31, 2022.

## **Phase Two: Qualitative Design**

Phase Two consists of semi-structured interviews and focus groups asking participants about their Dancing Classrooms experiences and their perceived impact of the program.

### Semi-Structured Interviews & Focus Groups (Qualitative Tool):

Participants join a 30-minute virtual semi-structured interview or 45-minute focus group, hosted in password-secured Zoom, to answer questions about their Dancing Classrooms experience and their perceived impact it had on their SEL skills and IPV-related attitudes. Question protocols

include “How, if at all, has your *Dancing Classrooms* experience affected the way you interact with other people?” and “How, if at all, has your *Dancing Classrooms* experience affected the way you interact with intimate/romantic partner(s)?” Participants’ responses were anonymized and initially transcribed using subscription-based transcription software ([www.sonix.ai](http://www.sonix.ai)).

Automated transcriptions were manually reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. Final transcription documents were stored on a password-protected, portable HHD before being deleted from the transcription software’s Cloud storage. Responses were analyzed with NVivo to test research questions and hypotheses.

### **Phase Three**

Phase Three evaluated Qualtrics survey results, interview/focus group findings, and established literature together to test research questions and hypotheses. Interpretations of the study results were made through this triangulation, which informed the conclusion and limitations of this study. Furthermore, this methodological design is highly replicable in other *Dancing Classrooms* alumni networks which promotes external validity.

### **Data & Sources**

#### **Sample Site**

Annually teaching 17,000 children, in-person and virtually, within 150 New York City Schools (Dancing Classrooms 2022), *Dancing Classrooms NYC* is the sample site for this dissertation research because it has the largest quantity of alumni. *Dancing Classrooms NYC* has the largest alumni population and maintains an active alumni network, making it an ideal sample site for reliably inviting alumni to participate in this dissertation study.



## Sampling

*Dancing Classrooms* alumni who were at least 18-years old were eligible to participate in this research study. Alumni were contacted through the *Dancing Classrooms* ListServ emails, official social media accounts, and through snowball sampling by word-of-mouth. Using multiple distribution routes increases variance of participants, as different demographics may be prone to certain outreach methods than others (ex., younger alumni may be more active on social media than older alumni). All 18+-year old alumni were allowed to participate in this research - no exclusions based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, or other related factors.

## Data Analyses

### SPSS Analysis

Following data collection and cleaning, Linear Regression and ANOVA analyses were performed to test research questions and hypotheses. Trends revealed by statistical tests inform the content of the Phase 2 interviews and focus groups. Results of Qualtrics Survey will be applied again during triangulation of findings in Phase Three.

### NVivo Software Analysis

Interviews were analyzed with NVivo using *structural coding*, a question-based categorization technique informed by research questions and hypotheses (MacQueen et al. 2008; Namey et al. 2008), to further measure the relationship between key variables of the study. Terms and definitions of SEL (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills,*

*responsible decision-making*), IPV (*abuse, control, violence*), and ICT (*frequency and duration of activities, equal status among members, supportive leadership, cooperation contact through shared goals, opportunity for friendship*) constitute the *structural coding* framework which supports testing of hypotheses and addressing research questions directly. Emergent themes outside of *structural coding* criteria were not analyzed in this study but remain valuable for future studies on *Dancing Classrooms* alumni. Following an analysis of topic frequencies and emergent themes, I compared results of Qualtrics surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to measure the internal validity of the findings (Creswell, 2009, p188).

## **Limitations**

### Participant Bias

A significant limitation of this study's findings is due to the *selective sampling* of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni. Since recruitment occurs via word-of-mouth, ListServes, and social media, there is an implicit assumption that alumni enjoyed their *Dancing Classrooms*' experience enough to stay connected in some capacity. This does not necessarily mean that all participants will have a homogenous view on the *perceived impact* of the program on their SEL skills and IPV-related attitudes, but it presents an inherent *bias* among respondents which limits the generalizability (external validity) of findings (Gertler et al., 2016, p59). While control variables may partially account for this limitation, it remains a significant consideration future research can account for.

### Submission Screening

Being that survey participation is anonymous, the possibility exists participants may complete the survey more than once. This is addressed using IP address screening. However, users may be able to obtain new IP addresses by accessing the internet from various locations. Alternatively, participants may use different devices (e.g., phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) to complete the survey multiple times. Erroneous and duplicate submissions are controlled as much as possible by omitting any duplicate submissions, non-legible responses, or being completed hastily in less than six minutes (the minimum completion time in the pilot survey).

### Instructor Variance

Another limitation to note is the variance of instruction by Teaching Artists. While the *Dulaine Method* of instruction is central to Dancing Classrooms' instructional model, the personality and presence of individual Teaching Artists are more difficult to account for across the program's 26 years of operation. I attempt to account for this by asking participants how they perceive the Teaching Artist influenced their Dancing Classrooms experience, if at all.

### Arts-education Modality

Knowing that people vary in preference and are comfortable with different artistic forms, this study's external validity is influenced by participants' (dis)enjoyment of dancing. While *Dancing Classrooms* offers a unique social dance experience for youth, it is one of many art forms contributing to arts-based peace education and peacebuilding. Theatre, music, poetry, and painting are also forms of arts-based peacebuilding and peace education, which have unique strengths and limitations. Future research is needed to compare the similarities and differences

between different arts-based modalities to discern appropriate timing, context, and implementation of arts-based peace education programming.

### **Research Implications and Contributions**

This research meaningfully contributes to the conventional wisdom of arts-based peace education and IPV/GBV prevention policies. The research questions and related hypotheses are anticipated to reveal a strong correlation between the development of SEL behaviors and reduction of IPV-related factors. Applying the Intergroup Contact Theory framework, the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy of Dancing Classrooms fulfills conditions for positively transforming the perceptions, understandings, and relationships among participants. This study's anticipated findings support greater inclusion of social-dance programming among current conflict resolution and peace education programming in youth settings (e.g., schools, community centers) to promote positive relationships and communities. Future research is needed to understand program impact by comparing alumni with non-alumni (experimental design) and how alumni experiences affect their interpersonal behaviors over time (longitudinal design). Additionally, future research on arts-based peace education for adult participants is needed to reveal similar, or different, trends in SEL skill development and reduction of IPVAS attitudes. After this study, I will pursue these future research opportunities to analyze the broader impact and implications for arts-based peace education, specifically social dance with Dancing Classrooms, in building safer interpersonal relationships and communities, nationally and internationally.

## CHAPTER 7: Phase I – Quantitative Data and Findings

In this chapter, survey results of 275 Dancing Classrooms alumni are compared by analyzing SEL scores as well as their perceived impact *Dancing Classrooms* had on their SEL development. Alumni scale scores for SEL skills and IPV-related attitudes are regressed to determine what, if any, relationship exists. Findings indicate *Dancing Classrooms* positively impacts SEL development based on alumni perceptions; however, SEL skills significantly predicted lower *violence-related* IPVA only. Results suggest *Dancing Classrooms* is an exemplary arts-based peace education program for promoting SEL development (i.e., *power-with* attitudes), which in turn predictively decreases *violence-related* IPVA (i.e., *power-over* attitudes).

### **Alumni Virtual Surveys**

Of 745 responses collected between May 31<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 470 responses were omitted due to incompleteness of scale items, duplicate submissions, non-legible responses, or being hastily completed in less than six minutes (the minimum completion time in the pilot survey). Statistical analyses utilized the remaining 275 eligible responses.

### **Demographics**

Ages among respondents ranged from 18 to 50 years old, with 65% (n=179) being between 25-30 years old. Given the option to write in their ethnicity, participants identified as white or Caucasian (209, 76%), Latin (35, 12.7%), black or brown (13, 4.7%), American Indian (5, 1.8%), Asian Pacific South Islander (4, 1.5%), or Unidentified (7, 2.5%). Gender identities were represented by cisgender males (186, 67.6%) and cisgender women (74, 26.9%), with

marginal representation of transgender men (8, 2.9%), transgender women (2, 0.7%), nonbinary individuals (1, 0.4%), and those “prefer[ing] not to say” (4, 1.5%). Reported sexual orientations were mainly heterosexual (253, 92%) and the primary spoken language of participants was English (268, 97.5%). Education levels of participants varied between some high school (39, 14.2%), high school diploma or GED (28, 10.2%), college degree (133, 48.4%), and graduate degree (75, 27.3%). Ethnicity, sexual orientation, and primary language demographics were omitted from statistical models because they lacked sufficient variance for reliably comparing responses among demographic groupings. Only cisgender females and cisgender males yielded sufficient representation among gender identities for comparative statistical models. Therefore, a dummy variable for Gender (1=cisgender male, 2=cisgender female) was used for all Linear Regressions.

### **Reliability**

Reliability of the constructs (i.e., scales) used in this study (SEL, IPVAS, PI-SEL) were assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to determine internal consistency of scale items. Alpha values greater than 0.70 reflect sufficient reliability of scale items (Hair et al 2013). Results revealed that the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) scale with seventy items ( $\alpha = 0.98$ ) and Intimate Partner Violence Attitudes Scale (IPVAS) with twenty items ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) were found reliable. Additionally, the Perceived Impacted of Dancing Classrooms on SEL (PI-SEL) scale with fifteen items ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) was found reliable. Factor Analysis of SEL and IPVAS scales did not render any new underlying factors that hadn’t been identified in the literature.

## Hypothesis Testing

For investigating the effect of Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms (PI-SEL) on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and the relationship between SEL skills and IPV attitudes, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms alumni will perceive positive impact on SEL skill development.*

H<sub>1A</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of self-awareness skills.*

H<sub>1B</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of self-management skills.*

H<sub>1C</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of social awareness skills.*

H<sub>1D</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of relationship skills.*

H<sub>1E</sub>: *Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of responsible decision-making skills.*

H<sub>2</sub>: Individuals with high SEL skills will report low IPV-related attitudes.

H<sub>2A</sub>: *Individuals with high SEL skills will report low abuse-related attitudes.*

H<sub>2B</sub>: *Individuals with high SEL skills will report low control-related attitudes.*

H<sub>2C</sub>: *Individuals with high SEL skills will report low violence-related attitudes.*

Hypotheses were tested using Linear Regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results support H<sub>1</sub> and all H<sub>1</sub> sub-hypotheses. H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2C</sub> are also supported by findings; however, H<sub>2A</sub> and H<sub>2B</sub> are rejected. The following sections describe the procedures and findings for hypothesis

testing. All Linear Regressions conducted in this study controlled for *age*, *gender* (dummy coded for cisgender male and cisgender female), *education level*, and *participation grade* (dummy coded for 5<sup>th</sup> grade or 8<sup>th</sup> grade). No Linear Regressions indicated that any of the control variables significantly predicted SEL, PI-SEL, or IPVAS scoring for alumni within the sample. Thus, reporting on *age*, *gender*, *education level*, and *participation grade* is omitted from subsequent reporting sections for conciseness.

**H<sub>1</sub>: Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive impact on SEL skill development.**

My first main hypothesis assumed that alumni with greater perceived impact of their Dancing Classrooms experience (i.e., higher Overall PI-SEL) would self-assess higher social and emotional learning skills (i.e., Overall SEL). Overall SEL (DV) represents the cumulative mean score of all five core SEL skills (*self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, and *responsible decision-making*), while Overall PI-SEL (IV) represents the cumulative *perceived impact mean* scoring for *self-awareness* (PI-SEL 1), *self-management* (PI-SEL 2), *social awareness* (PI-SEL 3), *relationship skills* (PI-SEL 4), and *responsible decision-making* (PI-SEL 5). Linear regression results (see Table 7.1) show that 81% (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.81) of the variance in SEL skills can be collectively accounted for by Overall PI-SEL and control variables, with Overall PI-SEL positively predicting Overall SEL scoring ( $\beta=0.90$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Additional linear regression of specific PI-SEL items (see Table 7.2) revealed that alumni who perceived their Dancing Classrooms experience benefitted their emotional self-awareness ( $\beta=0.14$ ,  $p=0.05$ ), perspective-taking of others ( $\beta=0.16$ ,  $p=0.02$ ), understanding of social contexts ( $\beta=0.18$ ,  $p=.01$ ), and teambuilding skills ( $\beta=0.14$ ,  $p=0.04$ ) significantly predicted an increase in Overall SEL skills. Thus, H<sub>1</sub> was supported by linear regression results.



Table 7.1

*Results of Linear Regression with Overall Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Variable	Beta	SE	B
<b>Overall PI-SEL</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.90***</b>
Age	0.00	0.01	0.01
<b>Gender (D)</b>	<b>-0.10</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>-0.09*</b>
Education	-0.01	0.03	-0.01
Participation (D)	-0.01	0.05	-0.01

Note \* p < .05 // \*\* p < .01 // \*\*\* p < .001

Table 7.2

*Results of Linear Regression with Overall Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Variable	Beta	SE	$\beta$
<b>PI-SEL1_SelfAwareness</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.14*</b>
PI-SEL1_Identity	0.01	0.05	0.02
PI-SEL1_Purpose	0.04	0.05	0.05
PI-SEL2_Managing	0.05	0.05	0.06
PI-SEL2_Motivation	0.03	0.05	0.05
PI-SEL2_Organization	0.04	0.05	0.05
PI-SEL3_Compassion	0.05	0.05	0.07
<b>PI-SEL3_Perspective</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.16*</b>
<b>PI-SEL3_Context</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.18**</b>
PI-SEL4_Communication	0.04	0.05	0.05
<b>PI-SEL4_Teamwork</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.14*</b>
PI-SEL4_Management	0.06	0.05	0.07
PI-SEL5_Problems	0.03	0.05	0.03
PI-SEL5_Solutions	0.04	0.05	0.05
PI-SEL5_Impact	0.04	0.05	0.06
Age	0.00	0.01	0.01
Gender (D)	-0.10	0.06	-0.08
Education	-0.01	0.03	-0.02
Participation (D)	-0.04	0.05	-0.04

Note \* p < .05 // \*\* p < .01 // \*\*\* p < .001

It is important to note that the linear regression results (Table 7.1) indicated *gender* significantly predicted Overall SEL scoring with cisgender males being more likely to report higher SEL scores than cisgender female alumni within the sample ( $\beta=-0.09$ ). This is the only instance in this study of *gender* being statistically significant; however, *gender* did not significantly predict Overall SEL when controlling for PI-SEL subscales. To specifically determine what, if any, difference there may be between Overall SEL of cisgender females and males, an independent sample t-test was used and found no significant difference ( $t(258)=1.23$ ,  $p=0.22$ ) between the Overall SEL scores of cisgender females ( $M=3.92$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ) and cisgender males ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=0.56$ ). Considering the representation of cisgender male ( $n=186$ ) and female ( $n=74$ ) participants in the sample, the initially predicted significance of *gender* in linear

regression results likely reflects overrepresentation of cisgender males in the sample. Future research involving proportionate representation of *gender*, including but not limited to cisgender females and males, is needed to more effectively study how, if at all, gender predicts Overall SEL skills among Dancing Classrooms alumni.

H<sub>1</sub> was further tested with an ANOVA to determine any significant differences among alumni's perceived impact of *Dancing Classrooms* and their SEL skills. Frequency distribution of PI-SEL scores revealed insufficient n-size of *strongly disagree* (scored as 1) and *disagree* (scored as 2) responses for ANOVA analyses while n-sizes of *agree* (scored as 4) and *strongly agree* (5) responses were both high. To address this issue, PI-SEL scores were collapsed into “low” perceived impact ( $x \leq 3.34$ ), “moderate” perceived impact ( $3.35 \leq x \leq 4.34$ ), and “high” perceived impact ( $x > 4.34$ ) categories for analyses. ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of Overall PI-SEL on Overall SEL scoring,  $F(2,272) = 336, p < .001$ . Welch's test found no homogeneity of variance ( $p < .001$ ), meaning responses from *high*, *medium*, and *low* perceived impact groupings differed significantly. As seen in Table 7.3, the Overall SEL mean scores of *high* perceived impact participants positively and significantly different compared to SEL mean scores of *moderate* (+0.66) and *low* (+1.45) perceived impact participants in the sample ( $p < .001$ ). Similarly, *moderate* perceived impact participants rated their SEL skills significantly higher (+0.80) than *low* perceived impact participants. Thus, ANOVA results complement linear regression results and further support H<sub>1</sub>, reflecting SEL scores increased as perceptions of Dancing Classrooms' impact increased.

*H<sub>1A</sub> Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of self-awareness skills.*

To test assumptions between *self-awareness* skills and *perceived impact* on SEL skill development, linear regression was used to analyze the relationship between all five PI-SEL factors (IV) and *self-awareness* (DV) scoring. Linear regression results indicate that 73% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.73$ ) of *self-awareness* scoring is accounted for by all five PI-SEL factors, with PI-SEL 1 ( $\beta=0.46, p<.001$ ) and PI-SEL 3 ( $\beta=0.22, p<.05$ ) positively predicting *self-awareness* scoring. Further regression of all PI-SEL subscales (IV) and *self-awareness* (DV) indicated that increases in *emotional self-awareness* ( $\beta=0.29, p<.001$ ), *growth mindset and sense of purpose* ( $\beta=0.16, p<.05$ ), and *understanding of social contexts* ( $\beta=0.18, p<.05$ ) skills significantly predicted an increase in overall *self-awareness* scoring, suggesting that feeling valuable and involved with others increases feelings of *self-awareness*. Thus,  $H_{1A}$  is supported. Using ANOVA to test for any significant differences among alumni's perceived impact *Dancing Classrooms* had on their *self-awareness* skills, ANOVA results (see Table 7.3) revealed a significant main effect of PI-SEL on *self-awareness* skills,  $F(2,272) = 205.20, p<.001$ . *High* perceived impact participants scored significantly higher in *self-awareness* skills compared to *moderate and low* perceived impact participants ( $p<.001$ ). Similarly, *moderate* perceived impact participants rated *self-awareness* skills significantly higher than *low* perceived impact participants ( $p<.001$ ). Due to Levene's test revealing no homogeneity of variance ( $p<.001$ ),  $p$  values were derived using Welch's test. This revealed a significant main effect of perceived impact on *self-awareness* skills, Welch's  $F(2,131.69) = 158.37, p<.001$ ). Thus,  $H_{1A}$  is further supported, indicating alumni who perceived the program positively affected their *self-awareness* skills scored significantly higher on their self-assessed *self-awareness* skills than alumni with lower perceptions of program impact.

*H<sub>1B</sub> Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of self-management skills.*

Linear regression results between *self-management* skills (DV) and PI-SEL factors (IV) show that 74% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.74$ ) of *self-management* scoring is accounted for by all five PI-SEL factors, with PI-SEL 1 ( $\beta=0.26, p<.001$ ), PI-SEL 2 ( $\beta=0.20, p<.05$ ), PI-SEL 3 ( $\beta=0.25, p<.01$ ), and PI-SEL 4 ( $\beta=0.23, p<.01$ ) positively predicting *self-management* scoring. Further

Table 7.3  
Scale Responses of Perceived Impact of *Dancing Classrooms* and Overall SEL Skills

	High (H)		Moderate (M)		Low (L)		Means Differences		
	Mean	N-size	Mean	N-size	Mean	N-size	H/L	H/M	M/L
<b>Overall SEL</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>71/25.8%</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>158/57.5%</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>46/16.7%</b>	<b>1.45***</b>	<b>.66***</b>	<b>.80***</b>
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>79/28.7%</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>132/48%</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>64/23.3%</b>	<b>1.29***</b>	<b>0.61***</b>	<b>0.68***</b>
Emotional Self-Awareness	4.53	83/30.2%	4.03	121/44%	3.42	71/25.8%	1.10***	0.50***	0.60***
Identity and Self Knowledge <sup>H</sup>	4.48	94/34.2%	3.87	114/41.5%	3.48	67/24.4%	0.99***	0.60***	0.39***
Growth Mindset and Purpose <sup>H</sup>	4.54	85/30.9%	3.93	132/48%	3.29	58/21.1%	1.25***	0.61***	0.64***
<b>Self-Management</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>78/28.4%</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>136/49.5%</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>61/22.2%</b>	<b>1.15***</b>	<b>0.55***</b>	<b>0.60***</b>
Managing Emotions	4.44	86/31.3%	4.02	127/46.2%	3.53	60/21.8%	0.92***	0.42***	0.50***
Motivation, Agency, Goal-setting	4.58	88/32%	3.91	112/40.7%	3.50	75/27.3%	1.08***	0.67***	0.41***
Planning and Organization	4.48	82/29.8%	3.92	128/46.5%	3.52	65/23.6%	0.96***	0.56***	0.40***
<b>Social Awareness</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>68/24.7%</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>144/52.4%</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>63/22.9%</b>	<b>1.37***</b>	<b>0.69***</b>	<b>0.68***</b>
Empathy and Compassion <sup>H</sup>	4.48	83/30.2%	3.89	117/42.5%	3.47	75/27.3%	1.02***	0.60***	0.42***
Perspective Taking	4.43	82/29.8%	3.89	131/47.6%	3.28	62/22.5%	1.15***	0.54***	0.61***
Understanding Social Context	4.86	76/27.6%	3.93	128/46.5%	3.36	71/25.8%	1.23***	0.66***	0.57***
<b>Relationship Skills</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>65/23.6%</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>148/53.8%</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>62/22.5%</b>	<b>1.29***</b>	<b>0.53***</b>	<b>0.77***</b>
Communication <sup>H</sup>	4.51	76/27.6%	3.92	146/53.1%	3.52	53/19.3%	0.98***	0.59***	0.39***
Building Relationships/Teamwork	4.48	87/31.6%	3.94	128/46.5%	3.28	60/21.8%	1.20***	0.54***	0.66***
Conflict Management	4.49	75/27.3%	3.89	122/44.4%	3.44	78/28.4%	1.05***	0.60***	0.45***
<b>Responsible Decision-Making</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>56/20.4%</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>155/56.4%</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>64/23.3%</b>	<b>1.31***</b>	<b>0.61***</b>	<b>0.70***</b>
Problem Analysis	4.56**	65/23.6%	4.00*	135/49.1%	3.59	75/27.3%	0.98***	0.57***	0.41***
Identifying Solutions	4.44**	78/28.4%	3.84*	129/49.9%	3.37	68/24.7%	1.06***	0.60***	0.46***
Reflection on Impact	4.44**	71/25.8%	3.91*	138/50.2%	3.42	66/24%	1.02***	0.52***	0.49***

<sup>H</sup> Indicates Homogeneity (Equal Variance Assumed)

\*\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

regression of all PI-SEL subscales (IV) and *self-management* (DV) indicate that developing participants' *understanding of social contexts* ( $\beta=0.18, p<.05$ ) significantly predicts an increase in *self-management* skills. Thus, H<sub>1B</sub> is supported. Additionally, ANOVA results (see Table 7.3) revealed a significant main effect of PI-SEL on *self-management* skills,  $F(2,272) = 131.01, p<.001$ , with *high* perceived impact participants scoring significantly higher in *self-management* skills compared to *moderate and low* perceived impact groups ( $p<.001$ ). Again, *moderate* perceived impact participants rated *self-management* skills significantly higher than *low* perceived impact participants ( $p<.001$ ). Levene's test revealed no homogeneity of variance ( $p<.001$ ), so  $p$  values were derived using Welch's test. This revealed a significant main effect of perceived impact on *self-management* skills, Welch's  $F(2,126.22) = 100.93, p<.001$ ). Thus, H<sub>1B</sub> is supported, indicating alumni who perceived the program positively affected their *self-management* skills scored significantly higher on their self-assessed *self-management* skills than alumni with lower perceptions of program impact.

*H1(c) Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of social awareness skills.*

Linear regression results between *social awareness* skills (DV) and PI-SEL factors (IV) show that 72% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.72$ ) of *social awareness* scoring is accounted for by all five PI-SEL factors, with PI-SEL 3 ( $\beta=0.35, p<.001$ ) and PI-SEL 4 ( $\beta=0.26, p<.01$ ) positively predicting *social awareness* scoring. Further regression of all PI-SEL subscales (IV) and *social awareness* (DV) show that developing participants' *perspective-taking of others* ( $\beta=0.18, p<.05$ ) and *understanding of social contexts* ( $\beta=0.22, p<.01$ ) significantly predicts an increase in *social awareness* skills. Thus, H<sub>1C</sub> is supported. ANOVA results (see Table 7.3) also indicated a

significant main effect of PI-SEL on *social awareness* skills,  $F(2,272) = 214.26, p < .001$ , showing *high* perceived impact participants scored significantly higher in *social awareness* skills compared to *moderate and low* perceived impact groups ( $p < .001$ ). Similarly, *moderate* perceived impact participants rated *social awareness* skills significantly higher than *low* perceived impact participants ( $p < .001$ ). Levene's test showed no homogeneity of variance ( $p < .001$ ), so  $p$  values were derived from Welch's test. This revealed a significant main effect of perceived impact on *social awareness* skills, Welch's  $F(2,122.31) = 170.60, p < .001$ ). Thus, H1(c) is supported, indicating alumni who perceived the program positively affected their *social awareness* skills scored significantly higher on their self-assessed *social awareness* skills than alumni with lower perceptions of program impact.

*H1 (d) Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of relationship skills.*

Similar to H1C, linear regression results between *relationship skills* (DV) and PI-SEL factors (IV) show that 71% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.71$ ) of *relationship skills* scoring is accounted for by all five PI-SEL factors, with PI-SEL 3 ( $\beta=0.33, p < .001$ ) and PI-SEL 4 ( $\beta=0.43, p < .001$ ) positively predicting *relationship skills* scoring. Further regression of all PI-SEL subscales (IV) and *relationship skills* (DV) show that developing participants' *perspective-taking of others* ( $\beta=0.21, p < .05$ ), *understanding of social contexts* ( $\beta=0.18, p < .05$ ), and *teamwork skills* ( $\beta=0.23, p < .001$ ) significantly predicts an increase in *social awareness* skills. Thus, H1D is supported. Again, an ANOVA was used to determine any significant differences among alumni's perceived impact *Dancing Classrooms* had on their *relationship skills*. Results (see Table 7.3) reveal a significant main effect of PI-SEL on *relationship skills*,  $F(2,272) = 178.31, p < .001$ . *High*

perceived impact participants scored significantly higher in *relationship* skills compared to *moderate and low* perceived impact participants ( $p < .001$ ). Similarly, *moderate* perceived impact participants rated *relationship* skills significantly higher than *low* perceived impact participants ( $p < .001$ ). Due to Levene's test revealing there was not homogeneity of variance ( $p < .001$ ),  $p$  values were derived using Welch's test. This revealed a significant main effect of perceived impact on *relationship* skills, Welch's  $F(2, 116.02) = 142.69, p < .001$ ). Thus, H1(d) is supported, indicating alumni who perceived the program positively scored significantly higher on their self-assessed *relationship* skills than alumni with lower perceptions of program impact.

*H1 (e) Dancing Classrooms Alumni will perceive positive program impact on development of responsible decision-making skills.*

Linear regression results between *responsible decision-making* skills (DV) and PI-SEL factors (IV) show that 68% (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.68$ ) of *responsible decision-making* scoring is accounted for by all five PI-SEL factors, with PI-SEL 4 ( $\beta = 0.29, p < .01$ ) and PI-SEL 5 ( $\beta = 0.39, p < .001$ ) positively predicting *responsible decision-making* skills. Further regression of all PI-SEL subscales (IV) and *responsible decision-making* (DV) show that developing participants' *teamwork skills* ( $\beta = 0.18, p < .05$ ), *ability to analyze problems* ( $\beta = 0.17, p < .05$ ), and *solution-building skills* ( $\beta = 0.18, p < .05$ ) significantly predicts an increase in *social awareness* skills. Thus, H1E is supported. To determine any significant differences among alumni's perceived impact *Dancing Classrooms* had on their *responsible decision-making* skills, ANOVA results reveal a significant main effect of PI-SEL on *responsible decision-making* skills,  $F(2, 272) = 163.22, p < .001$ . *High* perceived impact participants scored significantly higher in *responsible decision-making* skills compared to *moderate and low* perceived impact participants ( $p < .001$ ). Similarly,

*moderate* perceived impact participants rated *responsible decision-making* skills significantly higher than *low* perceived impact participants ( $p < .001$ ). Due to Levene's test revealing there was not homogeneity of variance ( $p < .001$ ),  $p$  values were derived using Welch's test. This revealed a significant main effect of perceived impact on *responsible decision-making* skills, Welch's  $F(2, 110.73) = 134.58, p < .001$ ). Thus, H1(e) is supported, indicating alumni who perceived the program positively affected their *responsible decision-making* skills scored significantly higher on their self-assessed *responsible decision-making* skills than alumni with lower perceptions of program impact.

## **H2: Individuals with high SEL skills will report low IPV-related attitudes.**

My second main hypothesis assumed higher Overall SEL skills negatively predicts Overall IPV-related attitudes. Overall SEL (IV) represents the cumulative mean score of all five core SEL skills (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making*), while Overall IPVAS (DV) represents the cumulative mean score of the three core IPVAS items (*control, abuse, violence*). Linear regression results (see Table 7.4) show that 6% (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.06$ ) of the variance in SEL skills can be collectively accounted for by Overall SEL and control variables, with Overall SEL negatively predicting Overall IPVAS scoring ( $\beta = -0.21, p < .01$ ). Additional linear regression of the five core SEL scales revealed no significant predictability on Overall IPVAS skills. Thus, H<sub>2</sub> was supported by linear regression results; however, additional research is needed to account for the small effect size (Adj.  $R^2$ ) of SEL on IPVAS. The following sub-hypotheses test each of the IPVAS factors (*abuse, control, violence*) as well as sub-factors for abuse (*abuse by self, abuse by partner*) and control (*control by self, control by partner*).



Table 7.4

*Results of Linear Regression with Overall IPVAS*

Variable	Beta	SE	$\beta$
<b>Overall SEL</b>	<b>-0.21</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>-0.26**</b>
AGE	0.00	0.01	0.03
Gender (D)	-0.12	0.09	-0.12
Education Level	-0.06	0.04	-0.13
Participation Grade (D)	0.06	0.08	0.08

Note \*  $p < .05$  // \*\*  $p < .01$  // \*\*\*  $p < .001$

H2(A) *Individuals with high SEL skills will report low abuse-related attitudes.*

Linear regression results reveal a weak connection between *Overall Abuse-related Attitudes* (DV) and Overall SEL (IV), showing 7% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.07$ ) of *Overall Abuse-related Attitudes* scoring is accounted for by *Overall SEL* with no significant prediction on *Abuse-related attitudes*. Linear regression with individual SEL scales also bore no significance, resulting in H<sub>2A</sub> being rejected. Unsurprisingly, when controlling for other IPVAS factors, *Overall Control-related attitudes* ( $\beta=0.42$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and *Violence-related attitudes* ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $p<.01$ ) significantly predicted an increase in *Overall Abuse-related attitudes*, indicating that an individual's acceptance of controlling and/or violent attitudes increases the likelihood of abusive attitudes.

Additional linear regression on *Abuse by Self* (DV), Overall SEL (IV), *violence-related attitudes* (IV), *abuse by partner* (IV), *control by self* (IV), and *control by partner* (IV) show 75% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.75$ ) of *Abuse by Self* is accounted for by the model yet there is no significant predictability of *Overall SEL* on *Abuse by Self*. Regression results also show *violence-related attitudes* ( $\beta=0.26$ ,  $p<.001$ ), *abuse by partner* ( $\beta=0.40$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and *control by self* ( $\beta=0.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ) positively predicts abusive attitudes towards one's partner, however, *control by partner* ( $\beta=0.42$ ,  $p<.001$ ) negatively predicts abusive attitudes against their partner. This suggests that while participants are more likely to accept abusive attitudes if they accept other IPVAS-related attitudes, they may be less likely to have abusive attitudes if they expect their partner to be

controlling over them. Interestingly, swapping *Abuse by Partner* as the IV and *Abuse by Self* as the DV, linear regression results only show *Abuse by Self* ( $\beta=0.61$ ,  $p<.001$ ) as statistically significant, suggesting that participants who are more accepting of abusive attitudes to their partner are more likely to accept abuse by a partner in turn.

*H2(b) Individuals with high SEL skills will report low control-related attitudes.*

Linear regression results between *Overall Control-related Attitudes* (DV) and Overall SEL (IV) showing 27% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.27$ ) of *Overall Control-related Attitudes* scoring is accounted for by *Overall SEL* and other IPVAS-related attitudes. While *Overall SEL* had no significant predictability on *Control-related attitudes*, *Overall Abuse-related attitudes* ( $\beta=0.42$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and *Violence-related attitudes* ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $p<.01$ ) significantly predicted an increase in *Overall Control-related attitudes*, indicating that an individual's acceptability of abusive and violent attitudes increases when becoming more acceptable of controlling one's partner.

Additional linear regression on *Control by Self* (DV), Overall SEL (IV), *violence-related attitudes* (IV), *control by partner* (IV), *abuse by self* (IV), and *abuse by partner* (IV) show 62% (Adjusted  $R^2=0.62$ ) of *Control by Self* is accounted for by the model. Interestingly, results show *Overall SEL* ( $\beta=0.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ) positively predicts *control by self*, as does *abuse by self* ( $\beta=0.57$ ,  $p<.001$ ). When accounting for individual SEL core skills, linear regression results only maintain significant predictability for *abuse by self* ( $\beta=0.58$ ,  $p<.001$ ). This suggests SEL skill development may enable control-related attitudes for participants within the sample, particularly if participants accept abusive attitudes toward their partners. Interestingly, when swapping *control by self* as DV and *control by partner* as IV, *abuse by partner* ( $\beta=-0.30$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and *participation grade* ( $\beta=-0.15$ ,  $p<.05$ ) negatively predict *control by partner* attitudes. However,

when controlling for individual SEL factors, *participation grade* loses significance. This infers that participants who harbor abusive attitudes towards their partner are less accepting of controlling attitudes by their partner. Based on these findings, H<sub>2B</sub> is rejected

*H2(c) Individuals with high SEL skills will report low violence-related attitudes.*

Linear regression results between *Overall Violence-related Attitudes* (DV) and Overall SEL (IV) *abuse by self* (IV), *abuse by partner* (IV), *control by self* (IV), and *control by partner* (IV) show 51% (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.51) of *Violence-related attitudes* is accounted for by the model. Results indicate *Overall SEL* ( $\beta=-0.52$ ,  $p<.001$ ) negatively predicts *violence-related attitudes* while *Abuse by Self* ( $\beta=0.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ) positively predicts in contrast. While these results support H<sub>2C</sub> by suggesting greater SEL skill development decreases violence-related attitudes, it emphasizes how forming abusive attitudes toward a partner increases chance of violent attitudes and behaviors. Additional regression using individual SEL core skills revealed no significant predictability on *violence-related attitudes*, indicating that it may be a mixture of SEL skills that negatively affect *violence-related attitudes* rather than a specific core skill.

## **Additional Analyses**

### Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms and IPVAS

During hypothesis testing, I realized *perceived impact* (PI-SEL) groups may have differences in their IPV-related attitudes (IPVAS) that are distinct from their SEL scores. To test this assumption, I repurposed the ANOVA test for SEL mean scores to analyze differences among IPVAS mean scores instead (see Table 7.5).

ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of Overall PI-SEL on Overall IPVAS scoring,  $F(2,272) = 20.34, p < .001$ . Welch's test found no homogeneity of variance ( $p < .001$ ), meaning responses from *high*, *medium*, and *low* perceived impact groupings differed significantly. As seen in Table 7.5, the Overall IPVAS mean scores of *high* perceived impact participants negatively and significantly differed compared to IPVAS mean scores of *moderate* (-0.37) and *low* (-0.34) perceived impact participants in the sample ( $p < .001$ ). Unlike the SEL scoring which favored higher mean scores to reflect greater SEL behaviors, IPVAS scoring favorably low tendencies to reflect less IPV-related attitudes. Thus, ANOVA results indicate alumni with greater *perceived impact* of Dancing Classrooms on their SEL skill development report significantly lower Overall IPVAS attitudes compared to other *perceived impact* groups within the sample. Notably, mean averages of *abuse*, *control*, and *violence* scales were commonly lowest for *high perceived impact* participants compared to other groups, with *violence-related* attitudes being significantly lower compared to *medium* and *low perceived impact* groups. *Abuse* and *control* scales yielded more variance and less consistent significance.

While ANOVA results suggest a significant influence of PI-SEL on Overall IPVAS and *violence-related* attitudes, linear regression results between PI-SEL (IV) and Overall IPVAS (DV) showed 9% (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.09$ ) of Overall IPVAS is accounted for by the model. Linear regression results did reveal Overall PI-SEL significantly predicts a negative shift in Overall IPVAS ( $\beta = -0.32, p < .001$ ); however, the low adjusted  $R^2$  of the model indicates that more variables need to be controlled for in future research to further test relationships between PI-SEL and IPVAS of alumni. Additional linear regressions between PI-SEL (IV) and individual IPVAS scales (DV) revealed Overall PI-SEL scoring only significantly predicted a negative shift in *violence-related* attitudes ( $\beta = -0.60, p < .001$ ), with the model accounting for 48% (Adjusted  $R^2 =$

0.48) of the change. This suggests that while PI-SEL may not contribute to significant change in overall IPVAS scoring, it may significantly reduce *violence-related* attitudes of alumni.

Table 7.5  
Scale Responses of Perceived Impact of *Dancing Classrooms* and IPV Attitudes

	High (H)	Moderate	Low (L)	Means Differences		
	(71/25.8%)	(M) (158/57.5%)	(46/16.7%)	H/L	H/M	M/L
<b>Overall IPVAS</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>-0.34***</b>	<b>-0.37***</b>	<b>0.03</b>
<b>Abuse</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>3.201</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>-0.16</b>	<b>-0.60***</b>	<b>0.43***</b>
Abuse (By Self to Partner)	2.42	3.18	2.72	-0.30	-0.76***	0.46***
Abuse (By Partner to Self)	2.80	3.24	2.83	-0.03	-0.43*	0.41***
<b>Violence<sup>h</sup></b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>-1.38***</b>	<b>-0.54***</b>	<b>-0.85***</b>
<b>Control</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>-0.20</b>	<b>-0.27**</b>	<b>0.07</b>
Control (by Self)	3.38	3.71	2.94	0.44*	-0.33	0.77***
Control (by Partner)	2.34	2.12	2.76	-0.42*	0.26	-0.64***

<sup>h</sup> Indicates Homogeneity (Equal Variance Assumed)

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

### SEL and IPVAS Scales

While  $H_2$  tested assumptions regarding SEL behaviors' influence on IPVAS scales, I later considered assessing assumptions for an inverse relationship of IPVAS' influence on SEL behaviors. Linear regression between Overall SEL scoring (DV) and individual IPVAS scales (IV) indicated only *violence-related* attitudes bears significant predictability ( $\beta = -0.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), specifically by negatively influencing Overall SEL scoring. Being that the model only accounts for 43% (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.43$ ) of the change in Overall SEL scoring, additional research is needed to explore spurious or antecedent variables influencing Overall SEL scoring.

### **Results Summary**

Through hypothesis testing, this section examined assumptions between alumni's *perceived impact* Dancing Classrooms had on their SEL development, self-assessed SEL skills, and self-

evaluated IPV-related attitudes. Linear regression and ANOVA results supported Hypothesis 1 which asserted alumni with *high perceived impact* of Dancing Classrooms programming would also score higher on self-assessed SEL skills. Meanwhile, linear regression results only supported Hypothesis 2c's assumption that greater SEL skills significantly predict lower *violence-related* attitudes. Furthermore, linear regression results between *violence-related* attitudes (IV) and respective IPV-related attitudes (DV) revealed *violence* attitudes significantly predict increases in both overall *abuse-* ( $\beta=0.36, p<.001$ ) and overall *control-related* attitudes ( $\beta=0.24, p<.01$ ). Thus, while SEL development does not significantly predict decreases in *abuse* and *control* attitudes within the sample, the mitigation of *violence* attitudes inherently reduces risk of *abuse* and *control* attitudes.

Being that Dancing Classrooms may effectively reduce *violence-related* attitudes by developing SEL skills, these findings suggest Dancing Classrooms promotes IPV prevention through the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy. This suggestion is examined further by interviews and focus groups outlined and discussed in Chapter 8 (Qualitative Data and Findings). Ideally, future research incorporating experimental design or pre-/post-assessment design may control for confounding and spurious factors to better assess relationships between the impact of Dancing Classrooms programming, SEL skills, and IPV-related attitudes.

## Chapter 8: PHASE II - Qualitative Data and Findings

This chapter outlines the format and findings of structured interviews and expert panel focus groups with eight *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, seven Teaching Artists, and four Executive Program Directors of *Dancing Classrooms* sites across the United States – nineteen collective voices and stories. All conversations were hosted in password-protected Zoom sessions on KSU’s secure server, which were recorded and transcribed with the informed, expressed consent of all participants. Applying structural coding (MacQueen et al. 2008; Namey et al., 2008) with SEL-, IPV-, and ICT-related terms, I analyzed participant responses and reported results. Structured interviews and focus groups complement Alumni Survey results with deeper context and understanding of alumni experiences. Additionally, participants’ perceived efficacy of the Dulaine Method is framed within Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) criteria for theory testing. Following this study’s Sequential Explanatory Design (Bowen & Pilkington 2017, as noted in Chapter 6), interview protocols integrate Alumni Survey findings for participant evaluation and reflection, increasing internal validity of this study’s findings. Furthermore, integrating Alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Director perspectives supports validity of study findings through triangulation. This chapter presents (1) summary of sample participants and respective data collection modes, (2) results of SEL-related hypothesis testing, (3) alumni perceptions of *Dancing Classrooms*’ impact on IPV attitudes, (4) framing *Dulaine Method* with ICT, (5) practices for maintaining program consistency, and (6) discussion of findings.

## Sample Participants and Data Collection Modes

### Alumni – Structured Interviews

I conducted one-on-one interviews with eight alumni between October and November of 2022. One alumnus attended a midwestern U.S. *Dancing Classrooms* site, and the rest attended a northeastern U.S. *Dancing Classrooms* site. Seven alumni participated in the school-based 10-week program, and all partook in the extended weekend program for at least a year. Personal demographics of alumni were not collected for anonymity considerations. Structured interview protocols tested SEL and IPV hypotheses. Interview protocols for (1) overall experience, (2) perceptions of design impact, and (3) the most enjoyed experience of the program was added for greater context of alumni experiences and to increase validity of findings.

### Teaching Artists – Expert Panel Focus Group

An expert panel focus group involving seven veteran Teaching Artists from a northeastern U.S. *Dancing Classrooms* site was held in November 2022. Teaching Artists' experiences ranged from 10-17 years, with the majority being trained by, or having worked with, Pierre Dulaine directly. Personal demographics of Teaching Artists were not collected for anonymity considerations. The expert panel focus group protocols included (1) observed changes in student behavior over time, (2) most effective features (i.e., the “secret sauce”) of *Dancing Classrooms* pedagogy, and (3) an inspiring experience they had with a student. Structural coding of teaching artist responses complements Alumni responses for hypothesis testing and analyses.



## Executive/Program Directors – Structured Interviews/Expert Panel Focus Group

Two structured interviews and a two-person expert panel focus group were conducted with four Executive/Program Directors of *Dancing Classrooms* sites across the U.S. Personal demographics of Executive/Program Directors were not collected for anonymity considerations. Executive/Program Directors were presented with the same protocols as Teaching Artists, with an added protocol for (1) integrity and consistency of *Dancing Classrooms* programming across various national sites.

### Perceived Impact on SEL Skills

Addressing the first research question, *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted the development of their SEL skills?*, Alumni Survey results are integrated into interview protocols for alumni validation based on personal experiences. Only H1 sub-hypotheses (i.e., *perceived impact on SEL, PI-SEL*) are tested with interview protocols because H2 did not involve alumni *perceived impact*. Observed changes in SEL behaviors by veteran Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors are included for triangulation of analyses. Participant responses in the following section were tagged using *structural coding* based on SEL terms (*self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) and definitions.

**PI-SEL Q1 (Self-Awareness):** *“Many alumni indicated their Dancing Classrooms experience positively affected their ability to reflect on their thoughts and perceptions of a situation before responding. Does this reflect your experience? And if so, how?”*

All interviewed alumni agreed *Dancing Classrooms* positively affected their *self-awareness* skills, supporting Alumni Survey findings. Various ways *self-awareness* was positively affected include increased (1) self-confidence and (2) positive risk-taking encouraged by *Dancing Classrooms*, as reflected in alumni responses:

Self-confidence: "*I feel like Dancing Classrooms was the first program or the first thing that kind of gave me some sense of self pride and just like doing something to be proud of.*" (Interview Participant #6)

Positive Risk-taking: "*You have to reflect on yourself and your growth process going through it because you're going from when you don't know anything, and you feel uncomfortable, and you've never done something like this before.*" (Interview Participant #4)

Positive Risk-taking: "*With Dancing Classrooms you're not only having a fun time, but there is an active part of you that's required to think about how to perform the step that you're doing in the dance...I think for me that's a direct link of helping me whenever I'm in a social situation as well. On just how to internalize, reflect on whatever the matter be, and then prompt my response to that scenario.*" (Interview Participant #5)

One participant expressed gratitude for the accessibility of *Dancing Classrooms* programming and instruction, which benefited their self-esteem and self-confidence:

*"Being able to excel at something in the physical education world that was fully accessible to me without restrictions...I carry myself in a completely different way now both physically and*

*mentally, more of like shoulders back, head up approach. Definitely a lot more self-confidence."*

(Interview Participant #6)

Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors noted similar observations in student's *self-awareness*-related behaviors, notably enhancing students' (1) self-expression, (2) self-confidence, and (3) resiliency through discomfort:

Self-Expression: *"I had the experience where I was told over and over by the school, "Oh, she doesn't speak. She's a selective mute." And midway through the residency, she started speaking and she spoke in the culminating event."* (Focus Group Participant #3)

Resiliency: *"So there's that big jump that you can often find confidence levels. You see the students come into their own. They all are uncomfortable when we begin and when with that discomfort comes some negative feelings. It doesn't feel good to be vulnerable. It doesn't feel good to participate in something that they don't know anything about, and they don't feel they have the adequate skill set to do well. And then as they continue on the journey, they realize they absolutely have the potential and all the faculties to do well and that they are doing just as well as their classmates are doing. And they grow in confidence."* (Focus Group Participant #7)

Self-Confidence: *"Definitely they gain more confidence in trying out new things, the things they are not comfortable with. So by the time they finish performance, I can see they are very proud of their accomplishments, and they seem to be more confident."* (Focus Group Participant #1)

One Executive/Program Director noted how school administrators notice beneficial shifts in student behaviors as well:

*“Oftentimes when people describe the transformative nature of this program, they use the word confidence. I hear the principals talk about it all the time when they share what they've noticed.”*

(Focus Group Participant #8)

**PI-SEL Q2 (Self-Management):** “Similarly, some people actively acknowledge and manage their emotions to stay motivated in fulfilling their goals. Do you feel that your experience affected how you self-manage your emotions and stay motivated when making decisions? If so, how?”

In initial interviews, a couple alumni agreed that *Dancing Classrooms* positively affected their *self-management* skills; however, many alumni struggled to identify the context or significance of the question. This protocol was omitted from later interviews, favoring *structural coding* of responses instead. Based on statements by alumni, *self-management*-related skills were positively impacted by *Dancing Classrooms*, thus supporting Survey findings. Various ways *self-management* was positively affected include (1) increased emotional awareness and (2) mindful interactions with others, as demonstrated in responses:

Emotional Awareness: *"I think confronting those [uncomfortable] things at such a young age really sets you up to be like, 'How do I deal with being uncomfortable? How do I deal with novel situations and things like that?' So I think in that way it makes you a little bit more introspective or able to take a step back when you are in a new, uncomfortable situation."* (Interview Participant #4)

Mindful interactions: "[Dancing Classrooms] was really big on the respect you should have in that interaction with a person. And so, if you want something, you should ask the way you would like to be received or ask back in turn." (Interview Participant #8)

Observations by Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors note *self-management* of goals by students as well:

"I've seen students really push personal boundaries. For example, a student who was from a Muslim family who knew that his family would not approve of him dancing but loved it so much and loved how he engaged with his class, decided that he was going to continue to do it and try to negotiate with his family so he could continue to do it." (Focus Group Participant #3)

"You can watch, even in the course of one class, students become braver and more joyful and more willing to risk being wrong." (Interview Participant #10)

**PI-SEL Q3 (Social Awareness)**: "Many alumni indicated their *Dancing Classrooms* experience positively affected their ability to connect with others by being more aware of the emotions of others and being considerate of how others experience a shared space. Does this reflect your experience of the program, and if so, how?"

All alumni indicated their *social awareness* skills benefitted from their *Dancing Classrooms* experience, supporting Alumni Survey findings. As reflected in alumni responses, (1) empathy, (2) cultural awareness, (3) self-presentation, and (4) positive relationships were all *social awareness* skills promoted in the program:

Empathy: "You have to check in with your partner and meet them where they're at. And I think doing that for years, starting at a really young age, sets you up for like knowing how to check in with people and see how you're going to interact in that setting." (Interview Participant #4)

Empathy: "Now as an adult, Dancing Classrooms really made me empathetic towards different people of different cultures, ethnicities, [and] sexualities." (Interview Participant #2)

Empathy: "I think that's a huge part of Dancing Classing...you're always checking with the person you're dancing with." (Interview Participant #4)

Empathy: "It sort of brought in the understanding of empathy and compassion, which again, as a nine-year-old you really don't understand. But I honestly don't think that my level of empathy and sympathy would have been where they're at right now without the support that I had in Dancing Classrooms." (Interview Participant #8)

Cultural Awareness: "Being exposed to many different people of different backgrounds and cultures and making sure I'm well educated...can play a huge part in thinking before I say something around people, or at least knowing what the heck I'm talking about around people." (Interview Participant #2)

Cultural Awareness: "I feel a constant awareness of the differences and the different types of cultures that there are whenever I'm engaging with anyone and just how to go about speaking to them." (Interview Participant #5)

Self-Presentation: "We have to realize that what we showcase in our body language and what we say also helps gauge a room of comfort and it helps you be much more received." (Interview Participant #7)

Positive Relationships: "I feel like most people when they look at Dancing Classrooms it tends to affect how they interact with peers their age. But I feel like more, so it changed how I interact with adults and showing I was excited to all the adults I've interacted with through that opportunity." (Interview Participant #6)

Empathy, mutual understanding, and spatial awareness are *social awareness* skills similarly noted by Teaching Artists:

Empathy/Understanding: "It's that confidence, empathy, they start understanding how to treat each other with respect, and the confidence to display what they learned in the CE." (Focus Group Participant #1)

Spatial Awareness: "There is a change in terms of emotional maturity, intelligence, spatial intelligence, managing the space and not even just about dance moves, but just an awareness of people around you." (Focus Group Participant #2)

**PI-SEL Q4 (Relationship Skills)**: "Alumni in the survey reflected that effective communication and teamwork were skills that were positively impacted from their Dancing Classrooms experience and helped them build trusting relationships. Does that connect with your experience? And if so, how?"

Again, supporting Alumni Survey results, alumni unanimously agreed *Dancing Classrooms* positively impacted their *relationship skills*, supporting Alumni Survey results. Alumni emphasized program design and instruction benefiting their *relationship skills* more than any other SEL skills. Alumni remarks note (1) shared trust and respect and (2) (non)verbal communication among the *relationship skills* benefitted by their *Dancing Classrooms* experience:

Shared Trust and Respect: "*In the partner dancing, there's a level of respect and trust you have to have for other people, and I am sure that that's affected me in my daily life as well.*" (Interview Participant #3)

Shared Trust and Respect: "*It was a great experience to be able to share with everyone because you have the opportunity to rotate partners, so you're talking with everyone you build trust with, not just one person, but everyone collectively. That really led to that sort of teamwork environment.*" (Interview Participant #5)

Shared Trust and Respect: "*Yeah, I definitely think that the trust that I think my eighth-grade class as a whole gained from that program was definitely like it was definitely important and definitely something that was impacted. And those long-lasting relationships are definitely something that has affected me and like spoke to me and, like they're just a really nice bunch of people.*" (Interview Participant #6)

(Non)verbal Communication: "*I think reading body language would be my biggest thing because you have to be able to listen to people in a way that's not actually listening. It's like seeing them. And I feel like that is a very unique thing that happens in dancing that obviously is so applicable*



*to the real world if you're having a conversation with someone or things like that." (Interview Participant #3)*

(Non)verbal Communication: *"A very important skill that was taught in Dancing Classrooms was making eye contact with people. And that was a way of communication and of course, as a fourth grader, you would never do that." (Interview Participant #3)*

(Non)verbal Communication: *"We were on a daily basis just pretty much having connections with every team member. It just wasn't my dance partner. We often were asked to try different scenarios where we would try a dance with a different person, and then that meant having to communicate with that other person." (Interview Participant #8)*

(Non)verbal Communication: *"I mean, it didn't only help me practice English with other teammates, it helped me understand more about the American culture and about how the interactions really take place. How to greet your partner. How to be a team player. How to really just give your very best...It was magical for lack of a better term." (Interview Participant #7)*

Positive shifts in *relationships skills*, notably improved (1) interpersonal interactions and (2) school climate, are observed by Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors as well:

Interpersonal Interactions: *"I've seen changes in how students react to other students when they are going to be their next partner, where at the beginning there's obvious disdain that may happen between students and that is lessened during the course of the residency." (Interview Participant #9)*

Interpersonal Interactions: *“A lot of times dancing classrooms is super helpful in those situations where students may not have really practiced interpersonal relationships or relationship-building because it's just not comfortable for them or in their wheelhouse necessarily. This program sort of helps them come out of that box a little bit and they can practice what that means to be in physical contact with another person, or at the very least in the same physical space as another person. So, we always see changes in how students approach and react to other students within their classroom setting and also how they respond to and react with adults as well.”* (Interview Participant #99)

School Climate: *“Some of the overarching changes definitely is how the students interact with each other. Their respect that they show and extend to each other, that changes. And when the program is in the school for quite a long time, like many of our partners, they start to change the dynamics of the school and how the kids interact with each other throughout their school days and that somehow permeates through the culture of the school as well.”* (Focus Group Participant #7)

**PI-SEL Q5 (Responsible Decision-making)**: *“Alumni expressed their experience benefitted how they approach problems or scenarios and how they include and involve others in exploring solutions in various situations. Do you feel that your experience has impacted your skills in a similar way, and if so, how?”*

While most alumni (6 of 8) explicitly agreed *Dancing Classrooms* positively affected *responsible decision-making skills*, Alumni Survey results remained supported because all alumni expressed skills and experiences that align with *responsible decision-making skills*. Specifically, alumni expressed collaboration and teamwork as the main skills benefitted from

their *Dancing Classrooms* experience, even in moments where they did not enjoy dancing with a particular partner:

Collaboration: *"It was all about collaborative effort and making sure that the picture, that the dance we were performing was going to look good to the people we were performing for."*

(Interview Participant #1)

Collaboration: *"I think, at least for me professionally at work, that having gone through the *Dancing Classrooms* experience definitely helped me to approach most of what I do as much as in a collaborative environment that I could."* (Interview Participant #5)

Teamwork: *"I think for sure that *Dancing Classrooms* made me a lot more successful in group environments."* (Interview Participant #6)

Teamwork: *"When you have an issue, like maybe you have an issue with your partner or your partner is sick that day or with a new partner, then how is your team going to support you or how are you going to reach out to your team to ask for support."* (Interview Participant #4)

Teamwork: *"I find it very beneficial to not just offer help, but when I do get to work on a project with someone, we're sharing ideas and we're sharing different methods of how to approach something, which I find incredibly beneficial to me. And I also attribute that to the teamwork that was instilled in me from *Dancing Classrooms*."* (Interview Participant #5)

Teamwork: *"I feel like the program itself did involve us into making decisions that would fix some of the issues that we were having...and it wasn't scenarios that were planned. It just so happened,*

*I don't know, someone is sick today and they can't dance with their partner so let me take on that role. And then I see myself today and I do see myself taking part in the decision making that essentially just problem solve or make other people's days a lot better." (Interview Participant #8)*

Teamwork: *"What we did in this program was 'in frame' ourselves with people that we didn't necessarily like. It's just like, 'Ooh, we have to dance together. You are my archnemesis, but yet we're going to pretend for this one dance class. But we got to do it in a way that's respectful.' So, it teaches...you can still work and harvest good forward energy and progress with a person regardless if you like them or not." (Interview Participant #7)*

Teamwork and collaboration were also noted by Teaching Artists:

Teamwork: *"When they achieve those things, they are proud of themselves as well. And there's this sort of, 'We're going to do this for the sake of our team and we're going to move beyond whatever relationship issues we had with individuals for the greater good of what we're trying to accomplish.'" (Focus Group Participant #2)*

Teamwork: *"Also, the ability to work in partnership with not just your friends, but people who you may not get along with or people who just kind of annoy you in class." (Focus Group Participant #2)*

Collaboration: *"Behaviorally there is a huge transformation, which is very much rooted in collaboration skills that we push our students to partake in." (Focus Group Participant #4)*

### Perceived Impact of *Dancing Classrooms* on IPVA

*Dancing Classrooms* alumni also responded to IPV-related interview protocols to address the second research question: *How do Dancing Classrooms alumni perceive their experience impacted their IPV-related attitudes?* Only *Dancing Classrooms* alumni are presented with IPVA interview protocols, as asking Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors about alumni intimate relationships is inappropriate and speculative at best. Participant responses in the following section were tagged using *structural coding* based on IPV terms (*abuse, control, violence*) as well as CDC protective factors (see Chapter 4: Intimate Partner Violence).

**IPVA Q1 (Abuse):** *“Do you think your Dancing Classrooms experience affected your expectations about how you and an intimate partner speak to one another and stay accountable for how your words and actions may impact each other? And if so, how?”*

Most *Dancing Classrooms* alumni (7 out of 8) agreed their experience positively affected social and emotional expectations and accountability with their partners. Alumni emphasized several SEL-related, *power-with* skills that decreased their acceptance of *abuse-related* attitudes, including (1) communication, (2) consent, (3) collaboration, and (4) nonverbal connection:

Communication: *“Communication is very important, but not only communication, but also comprehension because you can communicate with a partner and talk but if you don't understand or comprehend what is being said, then it's just going to keep going back and forth.”* (Interview Participant #1)

Communication: *"It just becomes the norm to check in with the other person. I think that translates very well into a healthy relationship in the future, but it's like totally not a part of the conscious pedagogy or experience of the kiddos in the program. But it definitely transfers."*

(Interview Participant #4)

Consent: *"It's like this idea of asking for consent or for explicit engagement and interaction much before the conversation in an intimate partner setting, but it is that man asking the women, "Would you like to dance?" And those kind of class heteronormative values, but it's still the idea of we're being respectful of our partners or making sure that they do want to dance."* (Interview

Participant #4)

Consent: *"Making sure your partner is comfortable, leading them to the dance floor and making sure you have consent - 'May I have this dance?' - making sure you're not hounding the person, having the space around when you're in frame, and then most importantly, leading them back to their seat after your dance. Safety, making sure that your partner knows that while you're with them you should feel safe at all times."* (Interview Participant #2)

Consent: *"There is some aspect of consent that I think has to happen with a dance partner that I feel like also has to happen at the beginning of any kind of intimate relationship. When that has happened, I haven't thought of Dancing Classrooms in my romantic relationships, but I could see that those could be connected in some way."* (Interview Participant #3)

Collaboration: *"Collaboration was instilled in me from Dancing Classrooms, the aspect of how to collaborate...whether it's like hanging up art together, shopping food together, or seeing each*

*other's families together for events, all of that I can link back to as a sort of influence from what I learned in Dancing Classrooms."* (Interview Participant #5)

Nonverbal Connection: *"I remember in the program we have to look at our partners eye-to-eye at all times. We weren't explicitly told that there has to be a connection here, but you want to look at your partner because it shows the other person that there's trust. Like, 'I'm holding you, I'm holding your arms, we're going to do this dance together.' And when I think on my intimate relationships, I definitely see a resemblance or a lot of similarities with the things I was practicing with my dance partner."* (Interview Participant #8)

One alumnus did not explicitly state their agreement of *Dancing Classrooms*' positive impact on *power-with* expectations; however, they remarked "perhaps at the beginning of intimate relationships, I think there could be a connection in the way that you interact with a partner for the first time like a dance partner for the first time" (Interview Participant #3).

**IPVAS Q2 (Control):** *"Do you feel your experience has affected your expectations for how you and others that you're close to inform each other when making plans and maybe hanging out with other people? And if so, how?"*

Curiously, this is the only interview protocol without majority agreed of positive impact by *Dancing Classrooms*. Only one alumnus expressed *Dancing Classrooms* positively discouraging *control-related* attitudes, stating:

*“I think it’s something that definitely circles back to that level of empowerment that Dancing Classrooms gave me. So, I’d say, yeah, it’s definitely made me more not only independent but also confident in that independence”* (Interview Participant #6).

However, most alumni in early interviews did not see any connection with *Dancing Classrooms* curriculum and *control-related* attitudes, expressing that:

*“My expectations of what it means to be in an intimate relationship with a partner evolved so much later than my experience in Dancing Classrooms that I think any influence has to be deeply subconscious...I don't know that I could identify or articulate exactly how my Dancing Classrooms' experience affected my expectations of a partner”* (Interview Participant #4).

*“I can't say that this is really extended beyond.”* (Interview Participant #7)

These responses suggest the language and contextual framing of the interview protocol was ineffective and confusing to participants. After noticing this issue in initial alumni interviews the interview protocol was removed from remaining interviews due to poor performance of the protocol.

**IPVAS Q3 (Violence):** *“Do you feel your experience has affected your expectations for how you and an intimate partner respect each other’s physical boundaries and personal belongings? And if so, how?”*



All alumni expressed no acceptance for *violence-related* attitudes because *Dancing Classrooms* experience positively encouraged them to respect the physical boundaries of their partners and themselves. Alumni heavily noted *Dancing Classrooms*' pedagogical framework for instilling *power-with* values, including (1) respectful touch, (2) expressed consent, and (3) knowing boundaries:

Expressed Consent: "*From the very beginning it was emphasized about proper technique for dance, but also the right way to respect each other's physical space because you're physically touching someone so obviously you have to make sure you get the consent to actually touch this person before you begin dancing. And this was emphasized from a very early age about making sure that you are both proper and if someone feels uncomfortable, then they don't have to do what they don't want to do.*" (Interview Participant #1)

Expressed Consent: "*Regardless of whether it's platonic or you're in an intimate romantic relationship, those boundaries should be respected, communicated, and does not necessarily warrant explanation....If they do then that's great, but it's not something that should be forced from them.*" (Interview Participant #1)

Expressed Consent: "*Because of Dancing Classrooms, I am much more aware on making sure my partner is 100% comfortable with any physical touch or any intimacy that we have purely by just asking and not being afraid and asking...or if it's just a 'no', then it's not a personal thing. It could just be a simple 'No, not in the mood' or 'No', you know something along those lines....So 100% because of Dancing Classrooms and my exposure towards all of that made me much more socially aware and intimately aware about, I'll throw that word again, consent towards my partner.*" (Interview Participant #2)

Respectful Touch: *"Figuring out through the program, "Oh shit, the opposite sex that I'm attracted to are people," and then fast forward into adulthood with my partner, I think personal boundaries are everything." (Interview Participant #2)*

Knowing Boundaries: *"There are boundaries that are established when you're doing the merengue or doing the salsa, and things outside those boundaries are very obviously outside those boundaries. I feel like that could be translated as well to knowing boundaries in relationships." (Interview Participant #3)*

Respectful Touch: *"I think it does help kids form a sense of what does touch mean and what are different scenarios where we employ touch in our relationships....that part of it definitely did influence my future relationships with intimate space and physical touch and things like that." (Interview Participant #4)*

Respectful Touch: *"I think the program does a really good job about setting up those expectations for respectful touch, but also working to encourage platonic touch among friends." (Interview Participant #6)*

Knowing Boundaries: *"If someone tells you something you must listen, and this is a boundary thing...they have to put their trust into you, that you can do your job without being awkward or uncomfortable. This is the same for any kind of physical relationship, and when you are in a space and someone gives you a clear boundary, you have to understand that's a trigger and that bridges the lines of trust or opens the door for other pandemonium." (Interview Participant #7)*

Knowing Boundaries: "As a kid, it often looked or seemed weird to touch another girl or even a boy to dance with. But as time went on, I always reflected back on what dancing really meant. Not just touching a person, not just dancing with them, but what really went behind the picture. And today, I say to myself 'Gee, I'm literally dancing with everyone that I'm having some sort of friendship or relationship with.' Essentially, it's a dance that has twists and turns and that often we put a performance for, but the end goal should be to steal the show in terms that you want the very best for this relationship...The presence of just truly caring for that person's performance in addition to mine. So, I think the program did really help me." (Interview Participant #8)

### Framing *Dulaine Method* with Intergroup Contact Theory

*Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors all praise and attribute the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy for benefiting various social skills with emphasis on the interpersonal connections made through partner dancing. As noted in Chapter 5, the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy bares many similarities to Intergroup Contact Theory conditions. Using structural coding of ICT conditions, responses of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors theoretically frame and assess the *Dulaine Method's* capacity to positively improve interpersonal relationships. Participant responses in the following section were tagged using *structural coding* based on ICT terms (*adequate frequency and duration of activities, equal status among members, supportive leadership, relationship skills, responsible decision-making*) and definitions.

#### **Condition 1: Adequate Frequency and Duration of Activities**

Among alumni, only one specifically mentioned how the long-term design of the program benefited their interpersonal social skills and relationships with peers and the Teaching Artist:

*"It was pretty awkward in the beginning. You know, a bunch of eighth graders, it wasn't something they were super happy about doing, but over the semester we spent with them I definitely got more into it. I made really good connections with my teaching artist and just with all the different people from the program."* (Interview Participant #6)

When asked what the “secret sauce” of the Dulaine Method is, some Executive/Program Directors emphasized the benefits of the 10-week design allows “20 hours for each student” (Interview Participant #10). One Executive/Program Director specifically noted:

*“The length of time, the span of time is important...part of the power is in the length of time. The skills have to marinate over time, and that doing something for a month is different than doing something for 12 weeks. Beyond the obvious, it's the span of time for the journey to occur, which I think is very much an important component of why we have the impact that we have. And I don't think it would be the same if it were a shorter length of time.”* (Focus Participant #9)

### **Condition 2: Equal Status Among Members**

Many *Dancing Classrooms* alumni expressed gratitude and enjoyment for the program’s team-oriented design. Alumni felt the program “allowed us to be ourselves” (Interview Participant #2) in a safe environment where “nothing really bad happens out of it and you realize it’s kind of fun” (Interview Participant #3). Additional *equal status among members* qualities noted by alumni include (1) mutual respect among members, (2) safe environment, and (3) inclusive participation:

Mutual Respect: "*Creates an expectation for respectful touch and boundaries.*" (Interview Participant #6)

Safe Environment: "*Sometimes they'd pair boy-to-boy or girl-to-girl and in most cases if you're at a tough high school that'd be kind of frowned up on or you'd be made fun of, but we were able to turn that and be like, 'Yeah, we're just practicing our dance steps.'*" (Interview Participant #2)

Safe Environment: "*The kind of environment of safe vulnerability it puts you in I think it's really good and it's something else that has spoken to me about the program.*" (Interview P6)

Inclusive Participation: "*Often we would do the thing where there's a circle on the inside, a circle on the outside, you'd walk around in different directions and whoever you stopped in front of you danced with. So, it kind of forces you to introduce yourself, find out who this person is.*" (Interview Participant #4)

Inclusive Participation: "*And just even the way that I've seen Dancing Classrooms accommodate other students. My class didn't have any handicapped people, but I've seen videos of them working with students in wheelchairs or people from different religious backgrounds, or just people that were incredibly anxious about just touching someone else. Some people there were very, very antisocial and just the way they work to accommodate everyone really spoke to me.*" (Interview Participant #6)

Inclusive Participation: "*There's no kind of favoritism or like 'I want to dance with the popular people' or things like that. Like you can't do that. You have to dance with everyone.*" (Interview Participant #3)

Executive/Program Directors similarly emphasize the importance of safety and inclusion promoted by Teaching Artists:

Safety: “We never forced touching where it seems to be an issue for a student. So, we allow students to work at their own pace and join the classes sort of at their own pace, encouraging them and guiding them to step outside their own box and their own comfort zone within the parameters that they feel comfortable. So, we never yell at kids or bribe them or give consequences or any of those kinds of things. It's always through a voice of encouragement and respect and compassion that we gently guide the students on this journey.” (Interview Participant #9)

Inclusion: “The nuances of the language matter. I'm going to go old school here, but when it was, “ladies and gentlemen”, that mattered, that language made a difference. The updated version of that now, we were very intentional. So, for us, if it's “dancers”...that still matters. I'm acknowledging it needed to be updated, but I'm saying that we were very intentional with what that is.” (Focus Group Participant #9)

### **Condition 3: Supportive Leadership**

Alumni frequently expressed appreciated for encouragement and respect they felt from their respective Teaching Artists. Even when the alumni were feeling nervous about participating, “*Dancing Classrooms* kind of forces you out of your shell a little bit, but in a supportive way where you are always dancing with new people” (Interview Participant #4). This suggests Teaching Artists respectfully led students through the discomfort in support of developing their *power-with* skills. *Supportive Leadership* qualities noted by alumni include, (1) encouragement, (2) respect, and (3) consistency:

Encouragement: *"The belief that all of the adults in this situation have in us, even if we weren't excited about it, even if it wasn't something that we wanted to do, then just pushing and telling us that we were doing a good job."* (Interview Participant #6)

Consistency: *"They do teach you steps on different styles of dances and whatnot, but they still continue what the core message is to this day, which is the development of interpersonal connections and emotions."* (Interview Participant #2)

Consistency: *"A system where people are engaged in close physical touch through the lens of Art and dance...it takes away the weirdness of it when it's framed as, 'This is how two people dance when you do ballroom dancing. This is the physical touch component.'" (Interview Participant #4)*

Consistency: *"And I think that everything really was interconnected with the interactions happening with my team members, with the instructors and school administrators at that time that I can remember. It all just seemed to work effortlessly."* (Interview Participant #8)

Respect: *"I think having a teaching artist that just came very open and willing to listen."*  
(Interview Participant #6)

Respect: *"Teaching artists at the time spoke to me not as a child, but more so as a young adult and gave me some really good advice as I was molding what I was going to become as an adult in my teenage years."* (Interview Participant #2)

Teaching Artists shared many stories and experiences of gratitude for the *Dulaine Method* and its positive impact on youth. As Teaching Artists, they shared many personal values and beliefs that affirm *supportive leadership* qualities, notably in the way they (1) role-model skills, (2) build trust, and (3) empower students.

Role-model Skills: "*We all talk about how it's not about just your words, it's your actions, your body language is also saying something. And are they in sync? Are you saying one thing with your words and something else with your body? So, the way we do it, it's not about just body language, it's respectful body language.*" (Focus Group Participant #2)

Role-model Skills: "*The ritual around practicing gratitude in the class, the way we always are giving thanks...I think in the Dulaine Method being thankful and showing compassion is really important.*" (Focus Group Participant #3)

Role-model Skills: "*Let me be respectful and compassionate and put myself in the place of a fifth grader and talk how I would have wanted to be spoken to in that age...when you embody all of these things, you become that model and then your students mirror you.*" (Focus Group Participant #4)

Build Trust: "*We create a safe space where it's okay to make mistakes, it's okay to try new things, we can work through this together, then they also model that in the classroom.*" (Focus Group Participant #1)

Build Trust: "*There are two levels of trust...trust that the teaching artist brings to the classroom which sets the tone for how to interact...and there's also a rapport that is created in the trust*"



*you're able to build with your students and that permeates with the classroom in regard to how they respectfully work together at the physical contact.” (Focus Group Participant #7)*

Build Trust: *“Especially, I was born and raised in New York City, and you're taught, “Oh, let me have that serious face” and you see that in so many students. And you're like, “No, it's okay to smile. It doesn't make you weak, it's a strength.” So, I would say in terms of building trust, it's like teaching NYC kids that it's okay to smile and be happy and then that's how you make connections and that's how you build that trust and teamwork, and that's how you get people to want to work with you.” (Focus Group Participant #4)*

Empower Students: *“I think the way we come in with that approach of ‘We're treating everyone with respect, we're treating everyone with positive reinforcement, we treat everyone is in this together. Everyone is trying this for the first time.’” (Focus Group Participant #5)*

Empower Students: *“When I say to the child that, ‘Oh, you did such a good job’ or ‘beautiful frame’, I try to go around in a classroom and point out great stuff individually, not just as a class.” (Focus Group Participant #6)*

Empower Students: *“I feel like as the educators coming in, at least as for the teaching artists, we are trying to instill that confidence and bring up the level of belief.” (Focus Group #7)*

Executive/Program Directors similarly praised the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy for its structure, content, and impact; however, Teaching Artists were identified as the critical factor for the *Dulaine Method*'s success. As one participant mentioned, “The magic is the Teaching Artists. It's the human being. It's the human element that brings the program to life” (Focus Group

Participant #9). Demonstrating *supportive leadership* qualities, Executive/Program Directors emphasized (1) authentic support, (2) empowerment, and (3) consistency as being key qualities of effective Teaching Artists.

Authentic Support: “A teaching artist position for dancing classrooms is not something that just anybody can do. I think that you have to believe in the power of this program to create change within the students in order to be successful.” (Focus Group #8)

Empowerment: “Managing the classroom is the balance of command and control with humor and joy and that, you know, they have to kind of be somewhat in balance. If you're too much of any of them, like you're either are ruling with such an iron fist, like no one wants to be there and they despise you, or like, "We're just so fun" but like, people are hurting each other, right? And so, it's that constant ability to be able to fluctuate between the two, to take them on the journey, that IS, the Dulaine method, which is what we as human beings then bring said curriculum to life.”  
(Focus Group #9)

Consistency: “They all have a love for children. They all value education as an agent of change, and they believe in the work that we're doing. They consistently show up. They consistently show up with a positive attitude. They consistently show up curious to understand what's going on with the students so they can meet them where they are as best, they can, because that's an ongoing component that is not in the curriculum. That's something that the teaching artist has to figure out. But it is part of our philosophy of what we do is that we meet the students where they are.”  
(Focus Group #8)

Consistency: *“I think the fact that the structure of the program is that it's a consistent adult and that there aren't substitutes and that we unfortunately might sometimes be the first adult who shows up when they say that they're going to show up.”* (Focus Group #9)

Consistency: *“We are trained to always show respect and compassion as we're teaching and always creating a safe space. That means that we as teaching artists always exhibit respect and compassion for our students. And by creating a safe space and being present, we can see when students are having more difficulty than others in having a communication with another student.”*  
(Interview Participant #9)

Consistency: *“So the secret sauce is the teaching artists, how we're trained using the Delaine method, how it should be used, how it was presented to us, how we've witnessed it being done, and remembering that we are another adult in the room for these kids.”* (Interview Participant #9)

#### **Condition 4: Cooperative Contact Through Shared Goals**

The *Dulaine Method's* partner dancing pedagogy cultivates *cooperative contact through shared goals* of dancing together, as all participants attest to. Many alumni emphasized they enjoyed working together as a team, as one participant emphasized:

*“You have this shared goal of learning a dance together. So, I think it encourages you to make connections with people and be a little bit more open and talk to people you wouldn't necessarily talk or dance with people that you wouldn't think you'd be dancing with. So, I think in that way it really helps people open up.”* (Interview Participant #4)

*"Team building activities like that were at the core of every practice, at the core of every class. There was never a loss instructional time to get those skills to really show up with all of us. So that was ideal."* (Interview Participant #8)

For alumni who participated in the "Colors of the Rainbow" competition, they noted similar *cooperative contact* qualities when rehearsing with the competition team:

*"Everybody was working towards a goal, like in the team sports kind of mentality where it's like, 'This is a lot of fun. We're dancing, but we also kind of want to win.'"* (Interview Participant #4)

Observations by Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors support the *shared goal* of partner dancing encourages *cooperative behaviors* among students, specifically mentioning:

*"A lot of it is just right there in the artform. Partner dancing requires two people working together, responding to music and rhythm. It's the closeness and the dance making."* (Interview Participant #10)

*"There is a power of the crowd, because how many times we see that everybody is in the frame and this one child who doesn't want to touch anybody looks around and feels like 'everybody is in dance frame' and he's quickly in the frame as well."* (Focus Group #6)

*"That's inherently because of the fact it is ballroom dancing and it's done with the partner, that level of trust, give and take, negotiation of space with all those learning together. Maybe your partner is helping you out with one step and then you're able to help your partner out with a different step because you got that step a little better."* (Focus Group #7)

### **Condition 5: Opportunity for Friendship**

*Opportunity for friendship* represents the social context in which participants may become friends, rather than a specific pedagogical approach; however, the majority of alumni emphasized positive relationship-building and lasting friendships among the long-term benefits of their *Dancing Classrooms* experience. Considering the *Dulaine Method's* fulfillment of other ICT conditions, it is unsurprisingly students built positive, meaningful relationships among classmates through the program, as noted below:

*"I've made a lot of friends and there's a lot of people I look up to from that program and my participation in that program." (Interview Participant #6)*

*"Dancing is and was a passion that was ignited through the Dancing Classrooms program. But moreover, I think it was the relationships I was able to build and maintain. And I'm very grateful for Dancing Classrooms for allowing me that opportunity." (Interview Participant #1)*

*"Dancing Classrooms played a huge part in my life...a lot of my close friends that I'm still friends with to this day I met through Dancing Classrooms." (Interview Participant #1)*

*"Every time that we would do any different type of partner work, sort of dance, it required two young kids to get over their nerves or just focus on whatever the task at hand was or which was just to do the dance. But teaching us in that environment with everyone that was at our level and forming the friendships that I did week after week after week, we all got to know each other very closely. And I think that just inherently set the environment perfectly up to build trust in each other." (Interview Participant #5)*

### Practices for Maintaining Program Consistency

Increasing the validity of study findings, three of the four Executive/Program Directors were asked how they onboard new Teaching Artists and support veteran Teaching Artists to maintain integrity and consistency of the *Dulaine Method* across national sites. Residencies are not completely uniform, as one Executive/Program Director noted, “Success is going to look very different that’s what it’s going to require” (Focus Group Participant #9). Furthermore, operational capacities of residencies varied due to localized circumstances; however, all Executive/Program Directors shared commitment to program consistency. Representing three separate U.S.-based sites, Executive/Program Directors noted (1) mentorship, (2) refresher trainings, (3) experience-based learning, and (4) accessible resources as critical factors for sustaining and sharing the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy with Teaching Artists.

Mentorship: “The structure of support that a Teaching Artist gets during a residency is that, generally speaking, the first lesson is team taught...just to be another supportive assistant on the circle.” (Focus Group Participant #9)

Mentorship: “Often I will ask a new teaching artist to sort of be a mentee and go into a classroom with a seasoned teaching artist so that they can see what the program looks like on the ground. Because being trained in a group of your peers is one thing, but then applying your training into the real world is a totally different thing. And going from that secluded little peer space directly into a classroom that you're in charge of, I think is a huge jump and a jump that many people can't make. So, I think it's super important. It's an expense that a lot of sites can't manage. But I just think it's really important.” (Interview Participant #9)

Refresher Trainings: “*At the start of every school year basically have essentially, generally speaking, it's been a two-day kind of Day One is like, "remember how to dance the merengue?", get where everyone's put everything away for the summer and just go back through, dance through all the content, and then we divvy it up and have people teach various lessons, and we're students as they teach.*” (Focus Group Participant #9)

Refresher Trainings: “*And then once we become teaching artists and even as we are more seasoned teaching artists, there's constant professional development.*” (Interview Participant #9)

Accessible Resources: “*New York has always provided us with valuable tools in video and our curriculum, the written curriculum guide. So, we have always also had at our fingertips a variety of tools that people can use on their own time whenever they need it.*” (Focus Group Participant #8)

Accessible Resources: “*We have a program manager, so some sites call them senior teaching artists, some call them program managers, but we have a designated staff member who sort of oversees all of the teaching artists and helps.*” (Focus Group Participant #8)

Experiential Learning: “*The new teaching artists are taught with the same method that we teach our students so that they're experiencing that as they're learning.*” (Interview Participant #9)

Experiential Learning: “*It's an experiential program...And so our interpretation has always been, 'Let's know the script like the back of my hand so that I can manage the human beings safely in the room.'*” (Focus Group Participant #9)

## Results Summary

Responses from *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors indicate *Dancing Classrooms* programming positively contributes to SEL development, supporting Alumni Survey results and informing this study's first research question. While the same size of alumni is limited, observations from veteran Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors supplement and support alumni responses and Alumni Survey results. All alumni perceived *Dancing Classrooms* reduced *violence-related* IPVA (i.e., *power-over* attitudes) by promoting respectful touch, expressed consent, and recognized boundaries (i.e., *power-with* attitudes).

Most alumni similarly indicated *Dancing Classrooms* reduced *abuse-related* IPVA by promoting respectful communication, consent, and nonverbal connections. *Dancing Classrooms'* perceived impact on *control-related* IPVA was mixed among alumni, although this is likely due to poor performance and design of interview protocols. Compared to Alumni Survey results, alumni interview responses suggest *Dancing Classrooms* may better predict reduction in IPVA than merely SEL skills. This does not necessarily mean SEL skills are unrelated, but rather the way SEL skills are developed may influence how they are applied in different contexts. More research is needed to understand if *how* SEL skills are learned (i.e., development through dance) may be more influential than merely *what* SEL skills are known.

Utilizing Intergroup Contact Theory conditions to structurally code participant responses, the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy successfully fulfills all five conditions. This theoretical framing supplements research question by illustrating "how" *power-with* attitudes and behaviors are promoted and transferred via the *Dulaine Method* pedagogy. Granted, more rigorous study is required for definitive findings of impact. The purpose of these findings is merely to lay the first



stones for future research and exploration in intersecting arts-based peace education, IPV prevention, and SEL development.

## CHAPTER 9: Discussion and Conclusion

This research explores perceptions of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors to answer two core questions: “Does Arts-based peace education strengthen SEL skills?” and “Does Arts-based peace education reduce IPVA?” Specifically, I examined the extent to which *Dancing Classrooms* alumni perceive their experience impacted the development of their SEL skills and how alumni perceive their experience impacted their IPV-related attitudes. Combining electronic surveys with interviews and focus groups, this mixed methods study found alumni perceive *Dancing Classrooms* considerably strengthened their social and emotional learning (SEL) skills while also, unknowingly, promoting IPV protective factors. Framed within Intergroup Contact Theory, the *Dulaine Method* exhibits all five conditions for empowering youth to build positive, trusting relationships with peers, further supporting SEL enhancement and IPVA reduction: *Adequate frequency and duration for activities, equal status among members, supportive leadership, cooperative contact through shared goals, and opportunity for friendship*. This chapter outlines key findings revealing positive connections between arts-based peace education and social skill development, as well as inverse relationships between social skills and IPV attitudes. Study limitations and recommendations are provided to inform future research agendas. Final conclusions outline how arts-based peace education, specifically partnered dance, may effectively reduce IPV attitudes by teaching *power-with* behaviors in a safe and structured learning space.

### **Key Findings**

The following findings are supported by participant responses as well as established literature. While these findings are neither causal nor definitive, they illustrate how social dance and other movement-based arts may enhance SEL development and effectively prevent IPVA. While this

research offers a first attempt at assessing the possible impact of arts-based peace education and specifically movement-based arts on SEL and IPVA, further research on *Dancing Classrooms* and other movement-based arts programs is needed to determine the exact mechanisms that promote SEL development and inhibit IPVA.

### Dancing Classrooms Benefits Interpersonal SEL Development

Electronic survey results indicated at least 80% of the 275 participants (see Table 8.3) perceived their *Dancing Classrooms* experience positively benefited their SEL skills. While overall perceived impact (PI-SEL) scoring positively predicted SEL scoring (see Table 8.1), linear regression of individually developed SEL skills revealed *emotional self-awareness, perspective taking, understanding social context, and teamwork* skills were most significant for positively predicting SEL development (see Table 8.2). This suggests that *Dancing Classrooms*' yields greatest impact on SEL skills when teaching youth to be (1) aware of their emotions, (2) considerate of others, (3) open to new information, and (4) collaborative when making decisions. Structural coding of interviews and focus groups indicates *Dancing Classrooms* benefitted *social awareness* and *relationship skills* development most compared to *self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making* skills, which supports Alumni survey findings. These findings are expected, as *Dancing Classrooms* specifically encourages respectful communication and interactions between participants (*relationship skills*) and teaches participants to be considerate and accountable to each other's feelings and experiences when dancing together (*social awareness*). It is also possible that other SEL skills residually benefited from *Dancing Classrooms* (e.g., practicing *responsible decision-making skills* by working together), but because it is not an explicit goal of the program participants may have overlooked

the connection. Future research accounting for the non-explicit benefits of *Dancing Classrooms* can shed further light on these relationships.

Additionally, alumni interviewees expressed having greater empathy, cultural awareness, and positive relationships due to their *Dancing Classrooms* experience, while Teaching Artists and Executive/Program Directors generally observed positive behavioral shifts of increased respect and trust among youth (not specifically alumni participants) over the 10-week program. Thus, while *Dancing Classrooms* does benefit all SEL skills in some capacity, the greatest impacts are on interpersonal attitudes and behaviors (i.e., *power-with* behaviors). Based on established research illustrating how youth dance education benefits SEL development by practicing positive interpersonal social skills (see Chapter 4), this study's findings further demonstrate how arts-based peace education through partnered social dance may positively benefit interpersonal attitudes and behaviors. Within the context of *Dancing Classrooms*, this study expands on prior SEL research on *Dancing Classrooms* (Horowitz et al. 2016) by including alumni perspectives about post-program benefits and presenting a long-term perspective on the impact movement-based arts education has on SEL and IPVA. More broadly, this research demonstrates how Arts-based peace education effectively strengthens positive interpersonal social skills by teaching participants how to recognize and connect with their emotions, to communicate effectively, to collaborate with others, and to be accepting of vulnerability in a safe, structured environment. In doing so, participants gain greater self-confidence and resiliency to face uncertainty and engage in positive risk-taking through *power-with* behaviors.

### Dancing Classrooms Prevents Violence-related IPV

As seen in Table 8.5, this study found alumni who perceived *Dancing Classrooms* benefited their SEL skills scored significantly lower on overall IPV than alumni who felt *Dancing Classrooms* did not benefit their SEL skills. Additional analyses of IPV items (*abuse, control, violence*) indicate only *violence-related* IPV items significantly lowered among high PI-SEL alumni compared to low PI-SEL alumni. Alumni interview responses also reflect *Dancing Classrooms* mostly improved protective behaviors against *violence related* IPV, such as (1) expressed consent, (2) respectful touch, and (3) knowing boundaries. Alumni indicated *abuse-related* protective factors, specifically (non)verbal communication and collaboration, benefitted from their *Dancing Classrooms* experience. Alumni did not explicitly link their experience with *control-related* attitudes; however, the prevalence of consent-based language and collaborative perspectives mentioned in interviews suggests alumni may have misunderstood the context and meaning of *control-related* interview protocols. Overall, alumni expressed positive development of prosocial, *power-with* skills taught by the program. This study's findings align with the CDC's protective factors, including *emotional health and connectedness, empathy and concern for how one's actions affect others, strong social support networks, and stable, positive relationships with others*, demonstrating *Dancing Classrooms'* capacity as an arts-based IPV prevention program.

### Dancing Classrooms Empowers Intergroup Contact

The *Dulaine Method* pedagogy is strongly compatible with Intergroup Contact Theory. Structural coding results of interview and focus groups responses signaled several ICT conditions, including (1) *adequate time* through the 10-week format, (2) *equal status among*

*members* by creating as safe, respectful, inclusive space for students, (3) *supportive leadership* who consistently encouraged and respected students, (4) *cooperative contact through shared goal* of learning dance together as team, and (5) *opportunity for friendship* which many alumni expressed they remained friends with fellow students of the program. Combined with the *Dulaine Method* principles (*Creating a Safe Space, Respect and Compassion, Being Present, Command and Control, Language – Body and Verbal, and Humor and Joy*; see Chapter 2), these results demonstrate *Dancing Classrooms* successfully achieves Intergroup Contact Theory conditions by empowering positive interpersonal *power-with* connections among and between students and their Teaching Artists. These findings benefit existent dance research and ICT scholarship by theoretically demonstrating how partnered dance pedagogy through shared values and approaches for improving interpersonal relationships.

### **Study Limitations**

This research study examined how partnered social dancing, as demonstrated by *Dancing Classrooms*, can reduce IPV attitudes by cultivating collaborative, *power-with* behaviors and achieving ICT conditions to promote positive interpersonal interactions and relationships. This study presents inspiring findings for arts-based peacebuilding and IPV prevention literature; however, there are several limitations to this study to consider for future research. Firstly, this study unfortunately could not obtain a representative sample across various sociocultural identities and demographics. Despite publicly announcing the Alumni Survey on official *Dancing Classrooms* email listservs and social media accounts, white males were overrepresented in the sample compared to other gender identities. Most participants identified as heterosexual and primarily English speaking, further limiting the perspectives available in the

study. Future research sampling the experiences and perspectives of non-white, LGBTQ+ *Dancing Classrooms* alumni will greatly enhance this study's findings for understanding how *Dancing Classrooms* effects the development of social skills and IPV attitudes for participants across various demographics.

Secondly, all interviewed alumni participated in extended weekend programming provided by a Northeastern U.S. *Dancing Classrooms*. One of the eight alumni had never participated in the 10-week program, although their perspectives aligned with the experiences of other members. While their perspectives remain valuable for understanding long-term benefits of *Dancing Classrooms* programming, it may misrepresent the impact of the 10-week program by itself. Further alumni research accounting for 10-week exclusive participation can shed greater understanding of the program impact comparatively to the extended weekend programming.

Thirdly, all Teaching Artists were from a Northeastern U.S. based *Dancing Classrooms* site, limiting broader, national generalizations from Teaching Artist perspectives. Fortunately, the uniform framework of the *Dulaine Method* across all *Dancing Classrooms* sites supports the external validity of findings. Even so, future research including Teaching Artist perspectives across regional affiliate sites will inform the generalizability of this study's findings.

Fourthly, as noted earlier, poor performance of interview protocols involving *self-management* and *control related* IPVA limited participants' reported experiences. Future research should explore reframing the language and context of questions for clarity.

Lastly, this study is limited by the scope and scale of alumni experiences since they participated in *Dancing Classrooms*. The research design is cross-sectional, since COVID-19 related social distancing mandates made pre-/post-testing of affiliates sites impossible.

Additionally, no *control* group was able to test and compare with *Dancing Classrooms* alumni.

To account for the absence of pre-/post-testing and *control/experimental* design, this research study utilized *perceived impact* of alumni to establish comparable *high, medium, and low* groups for testing. Future research utilizing participant controls and/or pre-post-testing can offer greater significance to program impact.

## **Recommendations**

Findings of this study inform interdisciplinary research among dance scholars, peace scholars, and IPV scholars by presenting *Dancing Classrooms* as an example program for promoting positive, *power-with* attitudes and behaviors among youth. Recommendations are provided below for social dance organizations, arts-based peace education, and IPV prevention initiatives.

### Social Dance Organizations

Theoretically supported by ICT, *Dancing Classrooms* and the *Dulaine Method* demonstrate a consistent, structured, duplicable program for achieving community change and growth via social dance. Furthermore, *Dancing Classrooms* teaches peace education values including communication, cooperation, trust-building, and respect to promote sustainable, *positive peace*. This does not mean to imply *Dancing Classrooms* is the best and only way to achieve *positive peace* through the arts. Rather, this study encourages any body-based arts program, such as *Minds in Motions* (see Chapter 2), to utilize SEL, IPV, and ICT qualities for assessing program impacts on participants' social skill development and interpersonal relationship building. Social dance organizations wanting to enhance social skills development of their participants are encouraged to implement curriculum informed by ICT conditions. This process takes time and will require iterative efforts to meet community needs. *Dancing Classrooms* itself has undergone



several transformations in response to community needs and social justice, such as the Culturally Responsive - Sustaining Education (CRSE) which emphasizes historical and cultural context of dance forms (see Chapter 2), and gender-neutral instruction which were not present in the original 1994 framework.

As changes are transparently communicated and consistently implemented with ICT conditions, social dance organizations can expect positive interpersonal shifts among their participants and community. With that said, I must re-emphasize that *Dancing Classrooms* is by no means a “one-size-fits-all” model. While aligning with ICT conditions and IPV prevention characteristics, findings merely represent *Dancing Classrooms*’ impact within the United States. To appreciate and understand the broader impact and scope of social dance in various communities and social and cultural contexts, more research collaborations between social dance organizations and arts-based peacebuilding scholars, researchers, and practitioners is needed to enrich collective knowledge in ways that centralized local voices and stories.

### Arts-based Peace Education

Beyond arts-based organizations, this study benefits Peace Studies by recentering the body in peace education and conflict transformation through somatic learning. Body-based learning complements traditional peace education by teaching *power-with* social behaviors through physical interaction and coordination with others. In the process, participants constantly practice communicating verbally and nonverbally to enhance mutual understanding. As conflict scholars LeBaron, MacLeod, and Acland note in their edited book *The Choreography of Resolution: Conflict, Movement, and Neuroscience* (2013), arts-based peace education involving collaborative performances, such as dancing and theatre, encourages positive interdependent

relationships among performers as they collaboratively strive to achieve their “goal” to perform confidently (Deutsch 1962; Johnson & Johnson 1989). Empowering *power-with* behaviors and interactively promoting positive interpersonal attitudes, actions, and relationships are central to arts-based peace education and are supported by this study’s findings. More specifically, fulfilling intergroup contact conditions theoretically supports positive interpersonal relationship building through social dance. While this study did not emphasize pre-conflict and post-conflict settings, findings remain relevant for improving relationships within and among group members and, by extension, communities.

Within a post-conflict setting, peacebuilding practitioners can promote arts-based peace education by supporting local artists and performers to bring people together in a structured, safe format following ICT conditions. In doing so, participants may experience shared vulnerability, renewed sense of community, and greater self-confidence as they learn to move with others in safety and enjoyment. Outside of post-conflict settings, non-conflict affected communities are expected to enjoy similar benefits as the ones indicated by *Dancing Classrooms* alumni but should also be engaged in partnerships with community organizations and leaders.

Another recommendation for arts-based peace education is to elevate the perspectives of local communities and artists when selecting the social dances to be taught. In doing so, arts-based peace educators embrace the unique plurality of the Arts as “living” cultural practices which are performed in various social contexts and carry unique meanings to both performers and audience members. By empowering local voices and establishing ICT conditions, arts-based peacebuilding promotes positive interpersonal behaviors and collaborative, *power-with* relationships.

## IPV Prevention Initiatives

Promoting *power-with* behaviors and collaborative attitudes are effective IPV protective factors which, based on findings, are developed by *Dancing Classrooms*. Contributing to the expanding intersectional research on dance and IPV prevention, study findings demonstrate how positive social skill development through partnered social dance positively affects participants' empathy, consideration of others, and communication skills. Central to partnered social dance is an awareness of personal boundaries, of oneself and others, and the ability to collaboratively move together through iterative (non)verbal cues and interactions. As participants build comfort in establishing mutual understanding of boundaries and normalizing consent, they begin to anticipate the needs and interests of their dance partners to ensure one's actions align with the expectations of their partner. Through frequent and sustained interactive experiences, *power-with* attitudes are cultivated which promote *power-with* behaviors, on and off the dance floor.

This study does not presume social dance is appropriate for all settings and individuals, nor does it propose that social dance is the most effective method for IPV prevention. Rather, this study presents *Dancing Classrooms* as an example of how Arts-based peace education may effectively address IPVA by developing IPV protective behaviors when ICT conditions are met, whether intentionally or unintentionally. More research is needed to understand the scope and application of Arts-based IPV prevention in various contexts and communities; however, I encourage IPV prevention researchers and practitioners to explore collaboration with social dance organizations to assess how different styles, contexts, and presentations of social dance may affect development of IPV protective factors. Broadening collective understanding of general trends and unique nuances is necessary for appropriately promoting safer, healthier IPV attitudes.

## **Future Research**

Future research should expand this study's findings by accounting for previously noted limitations. Additionally, I plan to research broader national trends and localized variances among *Dancing Classrooms* sites, notably about how they are building community through innovative local partnerships. For example, *Dancing Classrooms* programming has been implemented outside of public education settings in varying community contexts, as a midwestern *Dancing Classrooms* site is doing between local law enforcement and community members to positively shift community relationships.

Additionally, future research should replicate this study with more alumni participants to more inclusively represent the various identities of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni at large, as this study's sample was mainly white, heterosexual, cisgendered men and women. With over 600,000 alumni instructed across 27 years, this study examined under 300 (approximately 0.0005%) of *Dancing Classrooms*' alumni population. Including more alumni in a replication of this study is essential for building deeper understanding and validity of *Dancing Classrooms*' capacity as a de facto arts-based peace education and IPV prevention program.

I'm also interested in researching how social dance programs which promote ICT conditions promote collaborative, *power-with* behaviors among community members, in both non-conflict affected, and conflict affected communities. Again, I do not mean to imply *Dancing Classrooms*' model is a one-size-fits-all model that other communities can, or should, use as a template. Rather, social dance organizations wanting to address social skill development and reduce IPV attitudes may draw inspiration and ideas from *Dancing Classrooms*' approach as they build locally centered programs.

## Conclusion

Over the past 27 years, *Dancing Classrooms* has been uniquely distinguished by its *Dulaine Method* framework and affiliate network. By training passionate, dedicated Teaching Artists in a codified pedagogical format, *Dancing Classrooms* offers an enriching 10-week curriculum of social dance artforms that students may not otherwise experience. As students embark on the journey, they are consistently guided by Teaching Artists to collaborate with fellow classmates in co-experiencing the fun of dancing together. Ingrained in these lessons are iterative opportunities to practice prosocial, *power-with* behaviors with their partners throughout the program. In doing so, students actively cultivate positive interpersonal values of consent, communication, and empathy which enhance IPV protective factors and decrease IPV risk factors. Based on alumni survey responses and interviews, cultivating these prosocial attitudes and building lasting friendships through the program encouraged alumni to continue practicing *power-with* behaviors outside of the dance floor, eventually permeating into intimate relationships. This research project, which is the first to study *Dancing Classrooms* alumni in any capacity, is also the first to integrate social dance, social emotional learning, and intergroup contact theory as an intimate partner violence prevention approach. While not directly claiming *Dancing Classrooms* is guaranteed to reduce IPV attitudes, findings and theoretical assessment suggest it is more likely than not. This study contributes to peace education and IPV research by demonstrating how teaching social dance within ICT conditions can subvert harmful interpersonal attitudes by promoting positive social skills and relationships. Future interdisciplinary research is needed to understand how and when arts-based peace education, including but not limited to social dance, may effectively prevent violence by teaching collaborative, *power-with* social skills and promoting positive, interpersonal relationships.

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## Chapter 5: Intergroup Contact Theory

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## Chapter 8: Phase II - Qualitative Data and Findings



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**Appendix A: “SEL – Self-Assessment for Adults”** (adapted from CASEL 2021)

*This 85-item self-assessment (adapted from the original 45-item survey) utilizes a 5-Point Likert Scale (adapted from the original 3-Point Scale) to measure perceived strengths in the five core SEL social behaviors (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-making) and behaviors when interacting with others.*

**1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree**

SELF-AWARENESS (18 items)		
	#	Question
Emotional Self-Awareness	1	I am able to name my emotions in the moment.
	2	I use self-reflection to understand the factors that contribute to my emotions.
	3	I use self-reflection to understand how my emotions impact me.
	4	I recognize when my emotions positively influence my behavior to people.
	5	I recognize when my emotions negatively influence my behavior to people.
	6	I recognize when my thoughts positively influence my behavior to people.
	7	I recognize when my thoughts negatively influence my behavior to people.
Identity and Self Knowledge	8	I know about my strengths.
	9	I know about my limitations.
	10	I reflect on ways in which my identity shapes my views.
Growth Mindset and Purpose	11	I believe I can influence my own future.
	12	I believe I can achieve my ambitions.
	13	I believe I have a valuable role in my work.
	14	I believe I have a valuable role in my family.
	15	I believe I have a valuable role in my community.
Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms	16	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my emotional self-awareness.
	17	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my sense of identity and self-knowledge.
	18	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my growth mindset and sense of purpose.
SELF-MANAGEMENT (14 items)		
Managing Emotions	1	I find ways to manage strong emotions in ways that don't negatively impact others.
	2	I can get through something even when I feel frustrated.
	3	I can calm myself when I feel stressed.

	4	I can calm myself when I feel nervous.
Motivation, Agency, and Goal-setting	5	I hold high expectations that motivate me to seek self-improvement.
	6	I take action on issues that are important to me.
	7	I take action on issues that are important to the larger community.
	8	I set measurable goals with clear steps in place to reach them.
Planning and Organization	9	I modify my plans in the face of new realities.
	10	When juggling multiple demands, I use strategies to regain focus.
	11	I balance my work life with personal renewal time.
Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms	12	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to manage my emotions.
	13	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to achieve my goals.
	14	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my planning and organization skills.
<b>SOCIAL AWARENESS (20 items)</b>		
Empathy and Compassion	1	I can grasp a person's perspective from verbal cues.
	2	I can grasp a person's perspective from nonverbal cues.
	3	I can recognize a person's feelings from verbal cues.
	4	I can recognize a person's feelings from nonverbal cues.
	5	I pay attention to the feelings of others.
	6	I recognize how my words impact the feelings of others.
	7	I recognize how my behavior impacts the feelings of others.
	8	I show care for others when I see that they have been harmed in some way.
Perspective Taking	9	I work to learn about the experiences of people of different races.
	10	I work to learn about the experiences of people of different ethnicities.
	11	I work to learn about the experiences of people of different cultures.
	12	I learn from those who have different opinions than me.
Understanding Social Context	13	I understand that systemic forces affect people.
	14	I understand that historical forces affect people.
	15	I understand that organizational forces affect people.
	16	I appreciate the cultural differences within my community.
	17	I appreciate the cultural differences within my workplace.
Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms	18	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my sense of empathy and compassion.
	19	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to see other perspectives.

	20	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my understanding of social context.
<b>RELATIONSHIP SKILLS (18 items)</b>		
Communication	1	I stay focused when listening to others.
	2	When listening to others I carefully consider their meaning.
	3	I can articulate ideas that are important to me in ways that engage others.
	4	I can have honest conversations about race with other community members.
	5	I can have honest conversations about racism with other community members.
Building Relationships and Teamwork	6	I connect meaningfully with community members who are from a different race than I am.
	7	I connect meaningfully with community members who are from a different culture than I am.
	8	I connect meaningfully with community members who are from a different socioeconomic background than I am.
	9	I get to know the people around me.
	10	I generate a collegial atmosphere.
	11	I make sure everyone has had an opportunity to share their ideas.
Conflict Management	12	When I am upset with someone, I talk to them about how I feel.
	13	When I am upset with someone, I listen to their perspective.
	14	I openly admit my mistakes to myself.
Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms	15	I openly admit my mistakes to others.
	16	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my communication skills.
	17	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my relationship building and teamwork skills.
	18	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my conflict management skills.
<b>RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING (15 items)</b>		
Problem Analysis	1	I gather information to explore the root causes of problems I see.
	2	I involve others impacted by conflict to explore a problem collaboratively before choosing a solution.
	3	I involve others impacted by conflict to explore a problem collaboratively before launching a new project.
Identifying Solutions	4	I involve others impacted by conflict to generate multiple solutions and predict the outcome of each solution to key problems.
	5	I involve others who are impacted by conflict to predict the outcome of each solution to key problems.

	6	I find practical ways to overcome difficulty, even when it comes to making decisions that may not be popular.
	7	I find respectful ways to overcome difficulty, even when it comes to making decisions that may not be popular.
	8	I consider how my choices will be viewed through the lens of the community I serve.
Reflection on Impact	9	I consider how my personal and professional decisions impact the lives of others.
	10	I consider how my professional decisions impact the lives of others.
	11	I help to make my personal community a better place.
	12	I help to make my professional community a better place.
Perceived Impact of Dancing Classrooms	13	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to analyze problems.
	14	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to identify solutions.
	15	My participation in Dancing Classrooms increased my ability to reflect on the impact I have on those around me.

**References:**

CASEL. 2021. "Personal SEL Reflection Tool." *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*. Retrieved from <https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/adult-sel-self-assessment/>

**Appendix B: “Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scales – Revised” (IPVAS-R)** (Fincham et al. 2008; adapted from original IPVAS Scale by Smith et al. 2005)

*This 20-item assessment (adapted by Fincham et al. 2008) utilizes a 5-point Likert scale to measure three key factors (Abuse, Violence, and Control) positively correlated with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Questions are numbered to reflect survey order.*

**1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree**

#	Question	Factor	Codes
8	As long as my partner doesn't hurt me, "threats" are excused.	Abuse	Threats_Partner
9	During a heated argument, it is okay for me to bring up something from my partner's past to hurt him or her.	Abuse	Hurtful_Past_Self
11	I think it helps our relationship for me to make my partner jealous.	Abuse	Make_Jealous_Self
6	I don't mind my partner doing something just to make me jealous.	Abuse	Make_Jealous_Partner
19	During a heated argument, it is okay for me to say something just to hurt my partner on purpose.	Abuse	Hurtful_Words_Self
12	It is no big deal if my partner insults me in front of others.	Abuse	Public_Insult_Partner
18	It is okay for me to accept blame for my partner doing bad things.	Abuse	Blame_Partner
4	It is okay for me to blame my partner when I do bad things.	Abuse	Blame_Self
3	It is not appropriate to insult my partner in front of others.	Abuse	Public_Insult_Self_NO
5	It is not acceptable for my partner to bring up something from the past to hurt me.	Abuse	Hurtful_Past_Partner_NO
20	It would never be appropriate to hit or try to hit one's partner with an object.	Violence	Object_Hit_Partner_NO
17	It would not be appropriate to ever kick, bite, or hit a partner with one's fist.	Violence	Fist_Hit_Partner_NO
14	Threatening a partner with a knife or gun is never appropriate.	Violence	Weapon_Threat_Partner_NO
15	I think it is wrong to ever damage anything that belongs to a partner.	Violence	Damage_Property_Partner_NO
10	I would never try to keep my partner from doing things with other people.	Control	Restrict_Activity_Self_NO
1	I would be flattered if my partner told me not to talk to someone of the other sex.	Control	NoTalk_OppSex_Partner

7	I would not stay with a partner who tried to keep me from doing things with other people.	Control	Restrict_Activity_Partner_NO
13	It is okay for me to tell my partner not to talk to someone of the opposite sex.	Control	NoTalk_OppSex_Self
2	I would not like for my partner to ask me what I did every minute of the day.	Control	Detailed_Account_Partner_NO
16	I think my partner should give me a detailed account of what he or she did during the day.	Control	Detailed_Account_Self

(\* indicates reverse-scored variables that measure anti-IPVAS attitude)

**References:**

Fincham, Frank D., Ming Cui, Scott Braithwaite, and Kay Pasley. 2008. "Attitudes Toward Intimate Partner Violence in Dating Relationships." *Psychological Assessment* 20(3): 260-9.

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## APPENDIX C: Interview/Focus Group Codebook

This codebook combines the Alumni Survey's SEL and IPVA self-assessment scales with the ICT conditions (outlined in Chapter 6) to *structurally code* responses of *Dancing Classrooms* alumni, Teaching Artists, and Executive/Program Directors for analysis.

Name	Description
<b>1. Social and Emotional Learning Skills</b>	
<b>1.1 Self-Awareness</b>	
1.1.1 Emotional Self-Awareness	Participant describes how emotions influence their behaviors.
1.1.2 Identity and Self-Knowledge	Participant describes how they perceive themselves.
1.1.3 Growth Mindset and Purpose	Participant describes their self-confidence.
<b>1.2 Self-Management</b>	
1.2.1 Managing Emotions	Participant describes managing emotions.
1.2.2 Motivation, Agency, and Goal-setting	Participant describes establishing and pursuing actionable plans.
1.2.3 Planning and Organization	Participant describes processes for managing tasks.
<b>1.3 Social Awareness</b>	
1.3.1 Empathy and Compassion	Participant describes perceiving how other people feel based on (non)verbal communication.
1.3.2 Perspective Taking	Participant describes actively learning the perspectives of others.
1.3.3 Understanding Social Context	Participant describes recognizing sociocultural forces influencing their environment.
<b>1.4 Relationship Skills</b>	
1.4.1 Communication	Participant describes communicating with others.
1.4.2 Building Relationships and Teamwork	Participant describes building meaningful connections with others.
1.4.3 Conflict Management	Participant describes open accountability when experiencing conflict.
<b>1.5 Responsible Decision-making</b>	
1.5.1 Problem Analysis	Participant describes information gathering during problems.
1.5.2 Identifying Solutions	Participant describes problem-solving processes with others.
1.5.3 Reflection on Impact	Participant describes their impact on others.



<b>2. Intimate Partner Violence Attitudes</b>	
2.1 Abuse	Participant describes behaviors which inflict verbal and psychological harm to oneself or others
2.2 Control	Participant describes restriction of another person's agency to make independent decisions.
2.3 Violence	Participant describes physical harm inflicted on oneself or another person
<b>3. Intergroup Contact Theory</b>	
3.1 Adequate Frequency and Duration for Activities	Participant describes the duration of Dancing Classrooms.
3.2 Equal Status Among Members	Participant describes the (un)fair treatment of people in Dancing Classrooms.
3.3 Supportive Leadership	Participant describes the influence of Dancing Classrooms Teaching Artists.
3.4 Cooperative Contact Through Shared Goals	Participant describes how they learned to dance with others.
3.5 Opportunity for Friendship	Participant describes meaningful connections they made in the program.