A Study Guide for Students of All Ages

Provided by the Colorado Ballet
Department of Education & Community Engagement

Colorado Ballet’s

The Nutcracker
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“As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding…Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines.”

DANCE

**Standard 1: Movement, Technique, and Performance**
Competence and confidence during a performance is the goal. Skillful movement and technique provide the practical substance for performance. Performance is the demonstration of human feeling and reasoning through movement. It is technical expertise and artistic expression through reflective practice, study, and evaluation of one’s own work and the work of others.

**Standard 3: Historical and Cultural Context**
The Historical and Cultural Context in dance focuses on understanding the relevance of dance. The aim is to know dance from a variety of cultures; understand how dance shapes and reflects cultures and history over time; and acknowledge dance in society as creative, expressive, communicable, and social.

**Standard 4: Reflect, Connect, and Respond**
Reflect upon dance to stimulate the imagination and challenge the intellect; connect it with other disciplines to enrich and enhance the spectrum of knowledge; and respond to it to deepen and refine one's emotional nature. Represent dance as art in oral and written communications. Critique and analyze new dance works, reconstructions, and masterpieces. Distinguish the aesthetic values of dance and discover the artistic intent.

SOCIAL STUDIES
**Standard 1:** History

**Standard 2:** Geography

MUSIC
**Standard 1:** Expression of Music

**Standard 4:** Aesthetic Valuation of Music

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION
**Standard 1:** Movement Competence and Understanding

READING, WRITING, COMMUNICATING
**Standard 1:** Oral Expression and Listening

**Standard 3:** Writing and Composition

*Information gathered from the Colorado Department of Education*
Synopsis of the Ballet

The curtain rises to reveal Herr Drosselmeyer in his workshop preparing for the party at the home of Dr. and Frau Stahlbaum. It's their annual Christmas Eve Party. The magical and eccentric Herr Drosselmeyer has planned a special surprise for his beloved godchild, Clara Stahlbaum. He presents her with a wonderfully mysterious wooden Nutcracker.

Clara is immediately taken with the gift. Clara's brother Fritz is jealous and steals the Nutcracker from Clara. In the chaos of his teasing, Fritz accidentally breaks the Nutcracker. Herr Drosselmeyer comes to the rescue and assures Clara that all will be well.

The party ends and Clara, just before the stroke of midnight, returns to the darkened living room to check on her Nutcracker. She is frightened by large mice, but suddenly, Herr Drosselmeyer appears and the mice flee. Much to Clara's amazement, Herr Drosselmeyer commands the Christmas tree to grow to such an enormous size that it pushes away the entire room. Next, he changes her little wooden toy into a life-size Nutcracker. The Nutcracker introduces himself and his soldiers to Clara.

The mice suddenly reappear, and a vicious battle ensues. The soldiers seem to be winning, but the great Mouse King appears and the tide turns. The Nutcracker and the Mouse King fight, and just as the Mouse King is about to overpower the Nutcracker, Clara distracts him, giving the Nutcracker the chance to overcome the Mouse King.

To Clara's delight and surprise, the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome young prince, who takes her off on an enchanted journey. He takes her to the Land of the Snow, and then to the beautiful Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy, where Clara is entertained by dances from many lands.

Clara and the Prince dance together surrounded by radiant flowers. The Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier then dance for Clara and the Prince. The Prince carries a sleeping Clara back to her home, where she awakens uncertain if her magical journey was a dream or reality.
Behind the Ballet

*The Nutcracker* debuted in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1892. The powerhouse production that is known today, was not always well-received. In the 120+ years since its premiere, this ballet has grown in popularity and relevance in society.

America experienced its first complete version of *The Nutcracker* in 1944 on Christmas Eve performed by the San Francisco Ballet. Since then, the story and music of this iconic production has found its way into movies, television, and children’s literature adaptations.

Many professional dance companies perform Nutcracker-related productions. The demand for this holiday tradition has fueled hip-hop, jazz, Jewish, and countless avant-garde variations.
Marius Petipa: Choreographer

Widely considered to be the “Father of Classical Ballet,” Marius Petipa is perhaps the most influential Ballet Master and choreographer of classical ballets of all time. His works remain influential today, cited as inspiration to dancers and choreographers such as George Balanchine.

Born in 1818 into a family of artists, Petipa was destined to perform. He began his ballet training under his father at the age of seven. Reluctant at first, he grew to enjoy performing, and displayed natural talent. At age twenty, Marius was appointed Premier Danseur for Ballet de Nantes in France.

After achieving critical success by choreographing *The Pharaoh’s Daughter*, Petipa became Ballet Master of the Imperial Ballet Theatre in St. Petersburg. He worked to produce spectacularly lavish ballets with Ivan Vsevolzhsky who also commissioned him for *The Nutcracker*. Petipa allowed his associate, Lev Ivanov, to choreograph much of the action, as it is said that Petipa was ill at this time. It is also suggested that he anticipated the work would not be well received and wanted to separate himself from it. He continued to work until his death at age 92.

“I can state that I created a ballet company of which everyone said – ‘St. Petersburg has the greatest ballet in all Europe.”

–Petipa
Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840, in Russia. His musical background began when he was five years old as he began to take piano lessons. As he grew, his parents hoped he would leave his music behind and work in the civil service. He worked with the Ministry of Justice for four years, but his interest in music only grew during this time.

At the age of twenty-one he started lessons at the Russian Musical Society and then shortly after enrolled at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Tchaikovsky’s work was first publicly performed in 1865. His first symphony was well-received after it was performed in Moscow. He established himself with his many symphonies, operas, and ballets. Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, and The Nutcracker are classic ballet all composed by Tchaikovsky.

Ironically, Tchaikovsky considered The Nutcracker among his least favorite works. Commissioned by Ivan Vsevolohsky, Director of the Imperial Theatres of St. Petersburg, The Nutcracker was composed in response to the success of Sleeping Beauty.

“Inspiration is a guest that does not willingly visit the lazy.”

—Tchaikovsky
**Positions of the arms:**

**Preparatory**
Arms dropped, elbows slightly rounded so that the arms do not touch the body, hands close but not touching

**1st**
Arms raised at the level of the diaphragm, elbows slightly bent, hands close but not touching

**2nd**
Arms opened to the sides, shoulders not drawn back or raised, hands at the level of the elbow

**High 5th**
Arms raised above, but just in front of the head, elbows rounded, hands close but not touching. Hands should be visible without raising the head.

**A Note on Hands:** In her Basic Principles of Classical Ballet, Agrippina Vaganova says, “The manner of holding the hands is very difficult to describe. All fingers are grouped freely and they are soft in their joints; the thumb touches the middle finger; the wrist is not bent, but the hand continues the general curved line on the arm from the shoulder.”
What are pointe shoes made of?
There are many different companies who produce pointe shoes, and therefore many ways of making them. Contrary to popular belief, pointe shoes are not made of wood or metal. The area around a dancer’s toes is called the box and is usually made out of a plaster-like material which is applied in several layers (Similar to the plaster/paper mâché-like substance that is used to create a piñata). A leather sole creates a sturdy back of the shoe.

How do dancers personalize their shoes?
Each dancer sews her own ribbons onto her shoe, to place them according to her preference. Also, most dancers darn or even burn the edges of the box (or platform) to give themselves better balance and decrease slipping. To make the sole and box more flexible, dancers may bend the shoes, and bang them on the wall or floor.

Do they hurt?
Yes and no. If a dancer is strong and trained well enough to dance en pointe and has the proper shoe for her foot, pointe work should not cause bleeding or disfigurement. However, dancing en pointe up to eight hours per day will wear on a ballerina’s feet. Some dancers choose to put small lamb’s wool pads over their toes. The amount of pain a dancer endures also depends on the construction of the foot itself. For example, dancers with toes that are relatively equal in length have the advantage of more support.

How long do they last?
Pointe shoes break down very quickly with frequent use. A ballerina made need a new pair of pointe shoes after each performance of a full-length ballet. In fact, Evelyn Cisneros, former Prima Ballerina at San Francisco Ballet, says that at least three pairs are required to get through Swan Lake. It is possible that a professional dancer will need a new pair each week.

How much do they cost?
Since pointe shoes are handmade and often imported, they can cost upwards of $90 per pair.

When does a dancer begin dancing en pointe?
It is important that a ballet student does not begin dancing en pointe too early, before the bones in her ankles have finished growing. Therefore, the age at which dancers begin pointe work varies. However, it is usually around 11 years old.

When did ballerinas begin dancing en pointe?
Marie Taglioni is attributed with performing a full-length ballet en pointe for the first time, when her father created the role of La Sylphide for her in 1832. However, her shoe was most likely just a satin slipper with a leather sole, darned at the ends. Without a firm box for support, dancers from this period must have relied heavily on their strength and suffered quite a bit. In some cases, wires were rigged onstage to carry ballerinas in a manner that resembled flight. The light, ethereal appearance of the ballerina en pointe effectively launched the Romantic Era of ballet.
Chocolate Marshmallow Peppermint Sticks

You will need:

- 12 candy canes
- 12 large marshmallows
- 1 cup of semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon of coconut oil

Directions:

- Break off curved tops of the candy canes so you are left with 12 sticks. Place curved tops in plastic bag and smash them. Pour crumbs into bowl.
- Put chocolate chips and oil in bowl and melt in 30 second increments. Repeat until melted.
- Line a cookie sheet with wax paper.
- Dip the broken end of a peppermint stick in the chocolate (about ½-inch) and then press it into marshmallow. Place marshmallow side. Repeat with the remaining sticks and marshmallows.
- Put the marshmallows in the refrigerator for 15 minutes or freezer for 5 minutes. The chocolate will keep the marshmallows from sliding off the sticks!
- Dunk the marshmallows in the chocolate. Let any excess chocolate drip off and then roll in the candy cane crumbs. Set it marshmallow side down. Repeat with the remaining marshmallow sticks.
- Wait for chocolate to set and enjoy!
Coloring Page

The Nutcracker
Make Your Own Snowflake

- Get a square piece of paper or trim a piece of paper so that it is square.
- Fold your square in half diagonally (Image 2).
- Fold your triangle in half - again diagonally (Image 3).
- Fold paper in thirds ... one side to the front, the other to the back (Image 4).
- Trim the extra piece of paper off the end of your small triangle.
- Around the outside of your triangle, cut some fun designs -- circles, squares, triangles, squiggles ... anything goes.
- Unfold your paper and look at your masterpiece.
- Voila! A snowflake to hang in your window.
LISTEN AND LEARN: Listen to music composed by Tchaikovsky. Close your eyes, if you need to. Now, answer the following questions: If this piece of music were a shape, what shape would it be? A color? An animal? A season? A place? Why? Is it fast, slow, or varied? What is the mood of the piece, or what emotions do you feel when you listen to it? Think of three more adjectives that you believe describe the music. Compare your answers with other students’. Are any of your answers the same? Why do you think you came up with similar or different answers?

MOVE TO THE MUSIC: Now, divide into groups and create movements that go with your team’s answers from the listening activity. Try to incorporate some of everyone’s answers. How do the animals move? How would you move in winter that’s different from how you move in summer? How would blue move, as opposed to orange? Some movements should be high; others should be low. Some should be fast; others could be slow. Be mindful of using all of your body, not just your feet. Link your movements together into a dance and perform it for the class.

POETRY IN MOTION: After seeing The Nutcracker, write a poem inspired by the performance. Now, try reversing that process! Get into groups, find a poem that you really like, and create a dance to go along with it! Identify powerful words and themes within the poem, and associate movements with them. Link the movements together to create a dance to perform for your peers. If you were to make an entire production out of your dance, what kind of sets and costumes would be fitting? Draw or make a collage of pictures representing how you would set the scene.

STORYTELLING THROUGH DANCE: Dance is an art form that tells a story through movement. Using a story or text your class is studying, you can recreate scenes from the story using dance. Put the students in small groups and assign different scenes from the story. Instruct the students to reinterpret the story using only movement. Invite the students to be creative in their reinterpretations, allow abstract or literal movement.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST: Utilize the Venn diagram below as a way to compare and contrast three different media mediums for storytelling. Now that you’ve seen The Nutcracker told on stage through movement, try comparing and contrasting it to two other holiday stories – one in literature and one in film. (Consider Disney’s new The Nutcracker and the Four Realms)
# Behind the Scenes: Jobs at the Ballet

## Artistic Director
*Hires dancers and Artistic Staff, chooses productions and choreographers*

- **Professional Dancer; Business/Management**

## Managing Director
*Creates and manages budget and policy, business development and long-range planning*

- **Accounting; Human Resources; Business; Non-Profit Management**

## Administrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accounting Manager</strong></td>
<td>Processes payroll and all deposits and expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accounting Associate</strong></td>
<td>Accounting; Data Entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Director</strong></td>
<td>Secures and oversees funding for the Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associate Director of Development</strong></td>
<td>Coordinates funding for the Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Associate-Events and Individual Giving</strong></td>
<td>Runs events, staff volunteers, purchases merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Associate-Database and Gift Fulfillment</strong></td>
<td>Coordinates large donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Officer</strong></td>
<td>Targets businesses for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Major Gifts Officer</strong></td>
<td>Pursues large donations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Artistic Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company Pianist</strong></td>
<td>Professional Musician</td>
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## Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Director</strong></td>
<td>Hires instructors and guest artists, directs curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Business Manager</strong></td>
<td>Schedules classes, oversees registration and payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Principal</strong></td>
<td>Oversees upper level Academy, teaches and evaluates new students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Division Coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Oversees lower level Academy, teaches and coordinates classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Administrator</strong></td>
<td>Data Entry; Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Dance Instructor</strong></td>
<td>Professional Dancer; Dancer Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Education & Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Department Manager</strong></td>
<td>Oversees all in-school and community dance programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Programs Manager</strong></td>
<td>Coordinates and teaches in-school dance programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Accessibility Coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Specializes in providing dance programming for people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outreach Dance Instructors</strong></td>
<td>Teaches in-school and in the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Education Programs

- **Company Dancers**
  - **Professional Dancer**

- **Music Director & Principal Conductor**
  - **Professional Musician**

- **Ballet Mistress**
  - Rehearses, choreographs and teaches technique

- **Outreach Dance Instructors**
  - Teaches in-school and in the community

- **Development Director**
  - Secures and oversees funding for the Company

- **Associate Director of Development**
  - Coordinates funding for the Company

- **Development Associate-Events and Individual Giving**
  - Runs events, staff volunteers, purchases merchandise

- **Development Associate-Database and Gift Fulfillment**
  - Coordinates large donations

- **Development Officer**
  - Targets businesses for support

- **Senior Major Gifts Officer**
  - Pursues large donations

- **Grant Manager**
  - Requests funding from government and foundations

- **Academy Administrator**
  - Data Entry; Customer Service

- **Academy Dance Instructor**
  - Professional Dancer; Dancer Instructor

- **Education Programs Manager**
  - Coordinates and teaches in-school dance programming

- **Education Accessibility Coordinator**
  - Specializes in providing dance programming for people with disabilities

- **Outreach Dance Instructors**
  - Teaches in-school and in the community
**Production**

Technical Director and Production Manager  
Manages stagehands and backstage activities including stagecraft; theatre; design; carpentry  

Production Stage Manager  
Cues stage crew during the show  

Facilities Manager  
Maintains building  

Company Manager  
Schedules dancers, writes contracts and visa applications  

Wardrobe Manager and Costume Designer  
Designs, creates and fits costumes, orders shoes  

Wardrobe Assistant  

Company Photographers and Videographers  

Performance Production: Master Carpenter, Prop Master, Lighting Director, Master Electrician, Pyrotechnician,  

Production Assistants Wellness:  
Company Physical Therapist, Acupuncturist, Chiropractor, Massage Therapist  

**Public Relations & Marketing**

Public Relations and Marketing Manager  
Communicates with press, social media Marketing; Public Relations; Communications; Journalism  

Marketing Associate and Graphic Designer  
Designs marketing materials, newsletters Marketing; PR; Communications; Journalism  

**Ticketing**

Ticketing and Database Manager  
Maintains patron database, staffs sales team  
Sales, Customer Service, Software programming  

Box Office Supervisor  
Operates box office  

Group Sales Agent  
Sells bulk tickets  

Ticketing Representatives  
Tickets sales in box office and by phone  
Data Entry; Customer Service
How to be a Good Audience Member

Unlike actors on your television, performers on the stage are aware of their audience and want very much to communicate their art to you and feel your appreciation in return. By the time you arrive at a theatre for a scheduled performance, many people (choreographers, composers, dancers, technicians, costume and lighting designers, etc.) have worked very hard to bring you their best efforts. In order to show respect for those efforts, every audience member must give the performance their full attention and avoid any behavior that interferes with anyone else doing the same. We have rules that help us accomplish this goal:

1. Always arrive at the theatre with plenty of time to find your seats and settle down into them. Late arrivals can be disruptive for fellow audience members and performers.

2. Please walk in the lobby.

3. Please put away cameras, cell phones or video recorders. Flashes are dangerous for dancers and unapproved photos and videos violate copyright laws.

4. The performance has begun once anyone on stage starts talking or dancing, or when the orchestra starts playing. You are welcome to show your appreciation for the performance with applause at the end of the ballet or sometimes at the end of a section or solo. You are also welcome to laugh if someone on stage is being intentionally funny.

5. Please refrain from talking or whispering during the performance. You will have plenty of time to discuss your impressions at intermission or after the show.

6. Please leave all food outside of the theater. You can enjoy your lunch or snack in the lobby during intermission.

7. Please use the bathroom before the show begins or at intermission, not during the performance.

8. Enjoy!
Education & Community Engagement

Providing highest-quality educational opportunities for preschool through adults, the Education & Community Engagement Department has served the Colorado community for 17 years. The department makes 30,000 contacts each year with at-risk youth, families, teachers, and people with special needs, reaching over 225 schools and organizations. Department staff have worked with the Colorado Department of Education in the development of statewide K-12 standards and assessments for dance education and have presented at the National Dance Education Organization’s annual conference, as well as the Colorado Dance Education Organization’s conferences.

The mission is simple: Every. Body. Dance!
Every. To make dance accessible to everyone.
Body. To promote dance and movement as part of a healthy lifestyle.
Dance. To encourage creativity and expression through dance and foster an appreciation for ballet.

PROGRAMS:
Student Matinees – Started by Colorado Ballet Trustee Diane Nolen, the Student Matinee series allows students to attend the final dress rehearsal of a Colorado Ballet production on a school field trip. Each year, one performance of The Nutcracker is offered for FREE to highest Title 1% (free and reduced lunch) schools.

Live Stream – In the 2017-2018 season, Colorado Ballet streamed two productions live to schools and organization all over the state and nation. The Nutcracker holds strong as a favorite with over 105,452 students watching live. This is a new and exciting endeavor for Colorado Ballet to increase access to ballet and live performance for those who are unable to attend due to geographic barriers.

Leap N Learn – Colorado Ballet’s afterschool residency program provides 12 weeks of class in creative movement and ballet foundations at more than 20 schools in the Denver Metro Area, 17 of which are high Title 1%. Students are provided with appropriate dancewear as well as reduced price ticket vouchers to a Colorado Ballet production. Select students are invited to the Leap N Learn summer camp, and one or two participants are chosen for a full-year scholarship to Colorado Ballet Academy.

Warren Village – Colorado Ballet enters the 14th year of partnership with Warren Village, an organization that helps motivated low-income, previously homeless single-parent families move from public assistance to personal and economic self-sufficiency. Creative movement classes are offered at no cost on a weekly basis throughout the school year to 24 preschool students. The students study a variety of dance concepts while working on spatial awareness, problem solving and strengthening the body and brain.

From the Page to the Stage – A traveling interactive school assembly featuring ten Colorado Ballet Studio Company Company dancers. From the Page to the Stage explores ballets
based on Shakespeare and the Classics of literature. Storytelling through movement, pointe shoes, male roles and athleticism in dance are discussed. Each school year 16-20 schools experience the show.

Workshops – In an effort to provide arts opportunities integrated with core curriculum initiatives, Colorado Ballet has created unique experiences for students including Words in Motion (poetry/vocabulary and movement), Metamorphosis Moves (the life cycle of a butterfly through movement, in partnership with the Butterfly Pavilion), as well as technique classes rooted in history such as West African dance, American Folk dance, and much more.

Be Beautiful, Be Yourself – In partnership with the Global Down Syndrome Foundation and the Sie Center for Down Syndrome at Children’s Hospital, Colorado Ballet hosts three classes each week for more than 25 students with Down Syndrome. Colorado Ballet instructors work closely with a professional physical therapist in the classroom, teaching creative movement and ballet concepts to increase cognitive and developmental skills.

Rhythm & Grace – Based on Mark Morris' training, Dance for Parkinson’s, Rhythm & Grace brings up to 30 adults and their caregivers to Colorado Ballet Studios for a seated, low-impact workout with live accompaniment incorporating dance concepts and meditation. Company Principal, Sharon Wehner, is an instructor, along with a handful of other trained staff.

Figaro – In addition to recognizing sponsors, Colorado Ballet was the first ballet company to use the Figaro seatback titling system as an optional tool for new patrons. Its brief, text-like cues translate mime sequences, introduce characters, and provide synoptic background. The service is available in English and Spanish.

Audio Description – One performance of each full-length Colorado Ballet production is audio described for blind and visually impaired patrons. Education staff extemporaneously narrate the performance from the catwalk while speaking directly to patrons through convenient headsets with adjustable volume.

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Bridget Heddens
Education Accessibility Coordinator
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www.coloradoballet.org/community
Thank You Supporters of Colorado Ballet’s Education & Community Engagement Programs!

¡Muchisimas Gracias!

Special thanks to these supporting organizations and the Colorado Ballet Board of Trustees!

Without you, these programs would not be possible.
Evaluation

Please mail to Colorado Ballet, Department of Education & Community Engagement:
1075 Santa Fe Dr. Denver, CO 80204, or fax to 303.861.7174.
Thank you for your feedback!

Name School

- How did you hear about our educational program?
- Were you pleased with the learning experience provided for your students? Why or why not?
- Were the supplementary materials useful to you? Why or why not?
- Were you able to incorporate the field trip into your curriculum? How?
- Are you confident that you will be able to incorporate movement activities in other lessons? If so, how will you do so? If not, how could we offer further support?
- Are there other areas of study that you wish we offered workshops in, or other program options you wish we offered? If so, which ones?
- Will you take advantage of our educational programming again? See additional programming at www.coloradoballet.org/community.
- Additional Comments: