

## Take the Lead

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When my mother dropped the DVD of *Take the Lead* in my lap, I rolled my eyes. I'd seen the previews and written it off as another silly dance movie.

Mom caught the eye-rolling and explained that one of the vice-principals at the high school where she works had watched the movie, bought it, and wanted everyone in the school to watch it too. He thought it had a great message.

"You might think it's hokey," Mom said, "But you'll like it." (I have a reputation for liking hokey movies.)



Antonio Banderas stars in this drama inspired by the true story of Pierre Dulaine, a dance teacher and competitor who volunteers his time to teach ballroom dancing to a diverse group of inner-city high school students in New York.

The movie follows a predictable plot – students resist teacher, teacher wins them over, teacher is won over by the energy and creativity of the students, several students face personal challenges. In the end, all obstacles are overcome in time to participate in a city-wide dance tournament.

But, this predictable plot is countered by the vibrant, creative performances of the cast and the knowledge that this film is based on a true story.

In fact, Dulaine launched a not-for-profit program with Yvonne Marceau called *Dancing Classrooms* in 1994 to bring social awareness, confidence and self-esteem to children.

Classroom and dance movies like *Take the Lead* exist for a reason. In the joy of expression and the energy of performance, there is something that connects us.

Together, the students in *Take the Lead* learn some valuable lessons about respect, sharing space and caring for each other.

Hokey? Yes. Watchable? Infinitely. Mom's always right.

### Related links:

- [Take the Lead website](#)
- [Dancing Classrooms](#)
- [More Tamarack movie reviews](#)

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