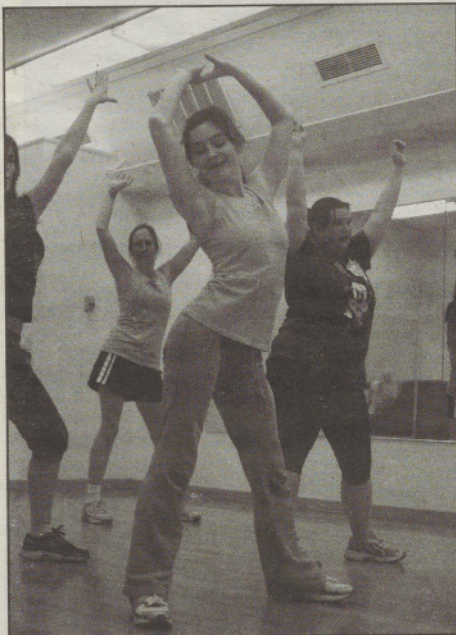


Zumba craze shakes students into shape

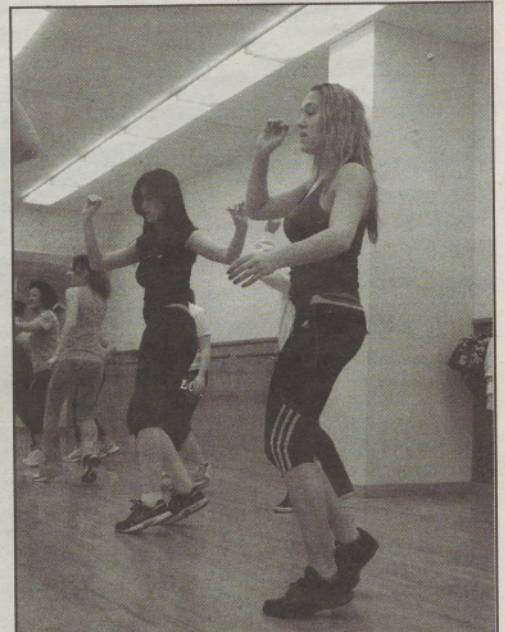


Kassandra Watson strikes a pose in Zumba class.

All photos by John William Howard The Clackamas Print

“
Zumba is sexy,
passionate and
alluring. Get
your sexy on,
join Zumba.”

Maria Dixon
Zumba instructor



Destiny Dumrud sways to the music.

By Nora Goodman
The Clackamas Print

Most people are fast asleep and dreading the ringing of their alarm at 5:30 a.m. on Monday mornings, but that can't be said for a small group of dedicated early morning risers that are the latest to get caught up in a world wide craze. Mixing music and dance, a fun new fitness form has been created: Zumba.

“Zumba is sexy, passionate and alluring,” said instructor Maria Dixon. “Get your sexy on. Join Zumba.”

Dixon, originally from Peru, is employed as an Administrative Assistant at Clackamas Community College. She began as an adviser and has been working in the testing department for more than six years ago. After being a substitute in the fall, she began teaching Zumba classes this term.

According to Dixon, Zumba originated in Miami,

Fla. more than 11 years ago and is now in more than 100 countries including Afghanistan, Brazil, Jamaica, Japan, India, Norway, Sweden, and Zambia.

Latin and other music is implemented into basic rhythm dance steps to get a good cardio workout. There are different levels of Zumba: Basic one and two and Zumba Gold, a level for beginners and people with disabilities.

Dixon also said that students who have taken Zumba have been known to lose weight, reduce blood pressure, depression, increase balance, better mental focus and have an overall more cheerful attitude. Despite the lengthy list of benefits and fun atmosphere, it's not a PE credit for nothing, as Zumba can leave even the fittest of people panting for breath with a smile on their face.

“Music is therapy to the soul,” said Emily Olsen, an evening Zumba student at CCC. Olsen was looking for a dance class with a good cardio work out and a lot of fun when she joined Zumba at CCC. She said the class is good for increasing endorphins,

which is needed to prevent depression during the cloudy Oregon winter months.

Tonya Durham joined the evening Zumba course at CCC determined to rebuild her strength and balance after being involved in a car accident which left her with 42 screws from the waist down. She said it has taken her a lot of work, but she loves to sweat, something that she certainly does a lot of while taking Zumba.

Luckily enough for those who aren't early risers, Zumba is offered at two times during the week, on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:30 p.m. until 6:50 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 6 a.m. until 7:20 a.m.

It seems that the perfect combination of cardio, good music, fun and dance has been achieved in Zumba, which has grown worldwide at an astonishing rate. While Clackamas only offers the two classes on campus, that number may grow as the fad continues to catch on.

Popular Clackamas course teaches methods for self-defense

By Mark Sunderland
The Clackamas Print

Tucked into a classroom at the back end of the gym in Randall Hall is the self-defense class. The walls are covered in thick white pads and the sound from the gym pervades the door. Led by PE Instructor Robin Robinson, the class begins with a series of stretches to loosen up the body. Banter between the teacher and the students seems to relax the minds of all students present.

Once stretches are done, the class begins with some basic kicks. Robinson has the students line up against the back wall of the room and commences kick drills. He moves from the back to the front of the class pausing to give clear and concise instruction on how to execute the various strikes and blocks.

“Turn the body, rotate the body,” Robinson says in a clear voice to the class as they work through learning an elbow strike. Words of instruction are clear and with Robinson describing the technique and showing how to execute the form.

An hour later, the class ends on a high note with encouraging words from Robinson and friendly conversation fills the room from both student and teacher.

While the class may sound fun, there are a lot more benefits to the course than just pleasure. In addition to the giving of required PE credits and training in self defense, the class is also part of a larger degree program and has typically been extremely popular.

“The self-defense class was part of the criminal justice program,” said Robinson. “It is one of the first classes filled up first every term.”

The popularity of the class isn't just in connection to criminal justice. It's also extremely beneficial in learning how to stay safe, as well as keep fit.

“Because I am a girl for one,” said student Leah Moe. “I'm small, so I'm taking self-defense to learn some moves to keep myself safe if that situation was ever to come up.”

Moe's motives are common among students, many of whom realize that learning a form of self-defense can go quite a long way. Even those who are there for fun know that the process is a lot of work. It is a PE class so one can expect to build up a sweat.

“It's very athletic and helpful and helps a lot of people who don't have training in self-defense or karate,” said Brandon Davis, who has returned to take the class several times.

Spencer Bellivar, another repeater, adds an interesting light to the class as he is in a wheelchair. However, despite his handicap, Bellivar insists that his wheelchair isn't an inhibition.

“It's different just because I have to think of how situations would work in my case,” said Bellivar. “Instead of kicking, I would just move my chair. I have to think of other ways I would do things. It's not more difficult.”

The class draws both new students and returning students but the reason for that is as much for the instructor as it is the class itself.

“[Robinson] is awesome,” said Moe. “He is very clarifying. He wants us to do the moves right. He doesn't want us to get injured while doing our moves and [he says] when we're practicing on someone, remember they can get pay back.”

“[Robinson] is very friendly, funny, always on time,” said Davison.

Robinson's full classes indicate that both he and his course are a hit, but self-defense isn't anything new to him. He's been teaching it with a passion for a long time.

“I started training in the karate style when I was 17 and I first got out of high school and have been in love with it ever since.

It's just a great lifestyle,” said Robinson. “When I first came here, they had a guy teaching karate and about the time it was time for him to move on. I acknowledged I could teach it and I've been doing it ever since.”

A teacher who loves what he does seems to be quite the recipe for a good teaching environment, and the students that attend the self-defense class all seemed to have fun. All in all, the class sounds like quite the experience and Robinson's students both give it high praise and advise their fellow students to join.



Alex Bowers hits a punching bag in Self-defense class.

Brad Heineke The Clackamas Print