

Teaching Culture Through Dance to Kindergarten Students

By

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Chapter I

Introduction

The New York State Social Studies Curriculum, at the kindergarten level, focuses on helping students develop an awareness of themselves as growing individuals. This includes helping students learn about their own unique qualities as well as similarities and commonalities to others. This involves learning about their own values, ideas, customs and traditions as well as cultures of others (New York State Standards, 1996). Sharing the diversity of the world we live in and teaching students tolerance and an acceptance of differences support the learning in these standards.

There are a number of ways to approach the teaching of these learning standards. The State suggests that a wide range of interdisciplinary activities can help children grow, develop and gain knowledge and skills (New York State Standards, 1996). One powerful way to cross disciplines and to make learning more meaningful to all students is through the arts. The arts are a defining part of our own culture and history and of every culture and history. Teaching the concepts stated above, through the arts, helps students answer the basic questions, covered in the standards, “Who am I?” and “Who are others?” The following text is taken from the introduction in The National Standards For Arts

Education:

The arts have been part of us from the very beginning. Since nomadic peoples first sang and danced for their ancestors, since hunters first painted their quarry on the walls of caves, since parents first acted out the stories of heroes for their

children, the arts have described, defined, and deepened human experience. All peoples, everywhere, have an abiding need for meaning.....the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children's minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization - ours included - the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term "education" (National Standards For Arts Education, 1994, p. 5).

Inherent in the social studies standards is the concept of culture. Culture explored through the arts is a natural way to discover and understand ourselves and the world in which we live. In her book Arts and Learning, Merryl Goldberg states, "The arts, as languages and expressions of cultures and peoples throughout the world, provide many concrete opportunities to educators who are dedicated to multicultural education" (Goldberg, 1997, p.13).

Of the art disciplines, dance, theatre, music, and visual art include cultural exploration in their content standards (National Standards for Arts Education, 1994). Music and visual art are subjects that are more commonly given a place in school curricula. Many students have instruction in these subjects outside of their general classroom instruction. Therefore, content standards in these disciplines are generally covered. Dance, however, is not commonly placed in curriculum schedules and so national standards in dance are often missing from instructional programs. Given my experience as a kindergarten teacher, I believe that dance should be a part of every student's learning. In fact, the arts, which are defined as art, dance, music and theatre, were federally mandated for learning by the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" and the 2002 "No Child Left Behind Act".

Furthermore, dance is an ideal way to approach teaching culture to kindergarten students (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000).

I developed a unit of study that uses dance to teach culture. I simultaneously instructed students in creative dance as well as viewed and learned a dance from another culture. I focused my lessons predominantly on the following National Dance Content Standards:

- #1. Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
- #5. Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods

In addition, throughout the unit, I addressed the current New York Social Studies Standards.

My assessments are two-fold: First, I assessed the students using the National Dance Achievement Standards. Second, I developed an interview questionnaire and a rubric for measuring how dance enhances a student's awareness of self and also an awareness of, specifically, how people are alike and different.

For assessment purposes, I randomly selected ten students (about one-half of the class) to interview prior to starting the dance unit and then interviewed the same students at the conclusion of the unit. I also used observational notes to record the ways I saw the class developing individually and collectively.

Significance of the problem

Dance and culture are a "natural marriage." Lutz and Kuhlman point out, "Dance is common to all humankind, regardless of the culture. Thus, the marriage of dance and

cultural teaching is natural, especially for young children, who learn best through participation, movement, and constructive practices” (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000 p. 35).

Yet, dance is not typically incorporated into classroom instruction. What is the reason for the lack of dance in our classrooms? Why is dance not used to teach across the curriculum, especially in areas where dance is such a natural method of instruction, as in teaching culture and cultural differences?

Rationale

I was not given pre-service training in how to use dance in my regular classroom. Most teachers, it seems to me, are not given training in how to use dance. Dance scholar Judith Lynne Hannah remarks, “The bald reality is that many universities and colleges have no program of dance education or have had cutbacks to existing programs” (Hannah, 1999, p. 187). The results of this lack of training are apparent in the National Center for Education Statistics. They report 57% of public elementary schools offer no dance education at all. Of the schools that do, 36% offer dance as part of the physical education program taught by the physical education teacher. (There was no information about how much dance or what kinds of dance were offered.) Three percent offer dance through physical education taught by a dance teacher and only four percent of schools offer dance as a separate program taught by a dance teacher (Hanna, 1999, p. 187).

It is because of my own background in dance that I have researched and explored how to incorporate dance into my classroom instruction. I have seen the many benefits of dance and continue to explore and research dance in education. In my searches, however, I find that resources are limited and somewhat inaccessible to someone who does not

have a background in dance. It is because of my personal experience, coupled with the scarcity of accessible resources, that I have chosen to create a unit of study that will incorporate both creative dance and cultural dance to address the kindergarten Social Studies Standards. I have made a body of work that provides educators, with or without a background in dance, with an accessible way to use dance to teach students about their own culture and other cultures.

In the following chapter, I have covered several aspects of dance in education. In the literature review, I have explored the history of dance in education, looked at dance in education today, gathered information on the importance of teaching diversity and tolerance in the classroom and, finally, discussed the benefits of dance in education, specifically, the benefits of using dance to teach culture.

Chapter II

Literature Review

An overview of dance

Dance is a hard term to define. A general definition of dance refers to human movement either used as a form of expression or presented in a social, spiritual or performance setting (Wikipedia, 2006). Our personal definition is framed by our own dance experiences and the dances we have seen (Zakkai, 1997). In our Western culture, the literature reflects, dance can bring to mind an array of images. For instance, dance can be seen as: staged entertainment (ballet, MTV, musicals, *Dancing With the Stars*); hip-hop street dance; ethnic dance from different cultures; do-si-dos in a country barn; and/or social (weddings, school dances, holiday dances) (Hanna, 1999; Joyce, 1994; Koff, 2001; Stinson, 2003). Sue Stinson, in her book Dance for Young Children, extends the definition even further by suggesting, “We see moments in sports that ‘look like dance,’ and even speak of some animal behavior as ‘dancing’” (Stinson, 2003, p. 2). Additionally, a particular cultural or aesthetic view of dance influences the definition of ‘dancer’.

Dance is sometimes viewed as performance and at other times as participatory. Depending on an individual’s opportunity, one may or may not have had experience participating in dance. In our Western culture, people who have not had much dance experience, if they are asked, will say they do not know how to dance. As a result, dance seems to be something out of reach. The performance view sees “dancers” as popular stars like Michael Jackson or ballet stars like Mikhail Baryshnikov (Koff, 2001). Images

such as these are of the specialized few who have trained for years. Unfortunately, a not uncommon attitude has developed - unless one has trained for years and is a performer, one is not a dancer. Susan Koff, in her article *Toward a Definition of Dance*, sees this view of “dance as entertainment” and “dancers as stars” as a key reason dance has difficulty finding acceptance into school curriculums (Koff, 2001).

Additionally, it is hard to find acceptance within the public domain of schools and build a curriculum on something that cannot be easily defined. Given that dance is hard to define and that people can feel excluded from its domain, it is easy to see the obstacles that have prevented dance from becoming part of our academic setting. Possibly, the development of dance in education, or lack of development, has fueled some of our attitudes and views. For the purposes of this study, it is important to look briefly at a few isolated views of dance and then look at the earlier part of the journey that dance has taken in our educational system.

Dance has existed since the beginning of time (Cote, 2006 p. 4). In her book Dance as a Way of Knowing, Jennifer Dohohue Zakkai writes, “Through out time, dancing has been a way that people of all cultures experience and communicate what is meaningful to them. Human beings have danced to influence natural forces, to reinforce political and social orders, to pass on myths, to enact rituals, to enjoy themselves and each other, and to express themselves artistically” (Zakkai, 1997 p. 19).

Historically, in our Western world, there is also a dark side of dance. There have been periods in history where dance was prohibited. For instance, dance scholar Judith Lynne Hanna writes, “The Western cultural heritage from biblical and early Greek times divides mind and body, the body supposedly undermining the integrity and purity of the mind

(Hanna 1999, p. 10). Dance was thought to “...arouse passions and undermined the civil society” and was “...linked to eroticism, temptation, sin and destruction” (Hanna, 1999, p. 10). These views influenced the Protestant ethic. Under Protestant rules, for instance, it was permissible for only children to dance and play. Hanna continues, “Adult dancing was considered the devil’s handiwork and is still suspect among some people today” (Hanna, 1999 p. 10).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the rich history of dance, which would encompass not only our own Western culture but other cultures as well and the many aspects of dance through time. However, looking at dance in the United States, it is important to notice that, historically, dance has had many guises and some of these have not been held in esteem.

History of Dance in Education

It is clear that there are many views of what dance is and has been and this directly impacts its acceptance in our culture and our system of education. With this in mind, it is important to look at dance in the United States, at the beginning of the 20th-century, to see how dance has evolved in our more current culture and in our education system. Judith Lynne Hanna, in her book Partnering Dance and Education, sets the stage for dance in education at the turn of the 20th century:

The roots of dance education in the United States are primarily Western in origin. Despite its central role as a social grace in genteel education in 16th-century Europe, dance was not seen as requiring serious use of the mind; dance had only a marginal role in ideological education. Later, the heritage of Puritanism and the Industrial Revolution further diverted attention from the significance of dance. Why was dance excluded from education? Because its instrument, the body, had

to be denied or harnessed in service of a chilling morality and economic productivity. At times disparaged and held in dispute, dance bears the weight of being prohibited or apologized for. So, dance did not merit inclusion in schools, universities, or scholarly research (Hanna, 1999, p. 50).

As dance evolved in 20th-century education, it frequently appeared within the framework of physical education.

At the beginning of the 1900's, dance became an integral part of many physical education programs for women (Hawkins, 1982, p. 3). Dance, at this time, was considered merely to be training for physical fitness or social grace; the dances that were taught were traditional folk and national dances (Hanna, 1999). Dance was offered at the college level for teacher training. These teachers in turn were the teachers teaching elementary and high school students in physical education classes. Dance was concerned with imitating certain steps of the folk dances. This was the focus for teacher training.

Then the definition of dance in education began to expand. Between 1910 and 1920, there was a surge of creative activity emphasizing individual expression. Hanna writes, "At the turn of the century, dancer Isadora Duncan, among others, changed the concept of dance in the Western world. As a performer and educator, she was instrumental in catalyzing the acceptance of dance as self expression" (Hanna, 1999, p. 51). Duncan broke away from ballet and revolutionized how people looked at dance. From this beginning of what would later become modern dance, the culture of dance art began to develop and profoundly influence dance in higher education. Teachers at colleges were encouraged to go and study the techniques of these new dancers. Dance continued to be

within the physical education department but new ideas about what to teach and how to teach it were visible (Hawkins, 1982).

An important figure at this time was Thomas D. Wood at Teachers College, Columbia University. According to Norma Schwendener, author of A History of Physical Education in the United States, he “favored dance of all forms as no other system of physical education had done before” (Hawkins, 1982, p. 6). Joining Wood was Gertrude Colby. She joined Wood at Teachers College in 1916. Colby realized her early dance training was not appropriate for children and developed an “approach to dance that was based upon natural movement and self-expression” (Hawkins, 1982, p. 7). A colleague of Colby, Margaret H'Doubler (University of Wisconsin) was also involved in the effort to create an educational approach to dance rather than just studying with modern dancers and bringing these techniques and performances back to teachers. Along with the influences of what was happening in the ‘dance world’, H'Doubler's work progressed rapidly. By 1926, she had founded the nation's first dance major program at The University of Wisconsin. The curriculum included preparation for dance teachers (Hawkins, 1982). These educators were devoted to creating programs for dance in education.

During this same time, there was also a new philosophy of education emerging. The fields of psychology and philosophy were influencing education and educators were encouraged to focus on the whole child. Schools were incorporating the ideas of John Dewey. Hanna points out that, “Although Dewey did not address dance directly, his prolific writing and teaching at Columbia University, Teachers College, were, nonetheless, pivotal in preparing school systems to offer dance for all children (Hanna,

1999 p. 57). There was a focus on ‘learning by doing’. These new ideas influenced and strengthened the physical education programs and “...dance as an aspect of physical education developed rapidly in this new educational environment” (Hawkins, 1982, p. 6).

However, over time, the general pull was for dance to move away from physical education and into departments of its own. Dance, in some parts of the country, was no longer part of physical education but became part of the Fine Arts. In this pull away from physical education, dance education lost some of its connectedness to teacher training. Dance departments continued to be strongly influenced by the techniques and ideas coming from the world of dance outside of education. College dance programs were looking to performing dance groups for inspiration and guidelines in developing their dance programs. In this process universities actually helped modern dance to flourish. The audiences becoming familiar with these new forms of dance were predominantly those involved in academia rather than the general public. In fact, Hawkins puts forth that by 1939, “...professional artists had become the guides for concert dance [and] educational dance (Hawkins, 1982, p. 19).

In a 1938 article published by the *Journal of Health and Physical Education*, problems associated with this begin to be perceptible:

It is apparent that dancing in physical education has been dominated by the concert stage, with the result that some of our dance teachers have so thoroughly inoculated themselves with the methods and points of view of the concert artist that they find it difficult to make a practical adaptation to the physical education environment. Some of these teachers are guilty of affecting a superior attitude toward the program in physical education and succeed only in developing a resentment among their colleagues which either ignores or openly ridicules the dance (Hawkins, 1982, p. 19).

An article in *Educational Dance*, written in 1939, continues to illustrate an early awareness of the confusion around dance education in our culture:

Now that the difficult, thankless pioneer work has been accomplished and dance in some form is accepted as a major activity in practically all schools, fresh dangers are presenting themselves as hindrances to continued growth and prestige of dance in education; and not the least of these is a confusion and misunderstanding of the terms participation and performance, which have been fostered thoughtlessly by many instructors and have come to be synonymous in the minds of their students (Hawkins, 1982, p. 19).

The focus was on concert dance and not on educational dance. By 1940, professional dance no longer looked to educators and their students for support. Hawkins sums up dance in education at this time:

Dance educators, after a ten-year period (1930-1940) of vigorous pioneering and of 'selling' modern dance to college administrators, students, and audiences, had succeeded in establishing modern dance as an integral part of the college program. They recognized, however, that they had not succeeded in clearly designing the direction that future development of dance in education should take. Up to this point college teachers in general had thought of dance in terms of professional dance; not until the early forties did they give any serious thought to dance in relation to general educational goals (Hawkins, 1982 p. 20).

Though many leaders in professional dance were interested in dance education and could be sympathetic to some of the problems faced by educators, they didn't feel responsible for being part of the solution.

There were also other influences impacting the direction that dance in education was moving. European influences included Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (Eurythmics) and

dancer/educator Rudolph Laban (Labanotation and Effort Shape). The field of developmental psychology and later cognitive psychology influenced dance educators. Piaget's views brought to center stage the thought and learning processes of children (Hanna, 1999). These influences were seen predominantly in physical education programs and in arts for children programs but dance was still a very tiny part of the education that children received in a school setting. Graduates of the dance departments were going on to teach dance in private studios, become professional artists, or work within the arts field. Hanna says, "Outside of physical education, student's exposure to dance was largely through the "Artists in School" program of the late 1950's.....then in the 1960's, the program sent individual artists or groups into the classroom to conduct workshops for students and offer professional development for teachers (Hanna, 1999 p. 55-56). Graduates of physical education programs were more often moving on to teach in K-12 settings and the amount of pre-service training in dance was greatly diminished.

There continued to be conflicts between dance, in the Fine Arts, and dance in Physical Education. Sarah Helsendager, a Temple University professor of dance, believes that the break has had negative consequences for teacher education in dance:

Dance is unique among arts disciplines in that [it] is both "of" and "distinct from" its historical parent -physical education. Highly specialized conservatory and degree-granting programs have proliferated; most give scant attention to formal teacher preparation. Yet the vast majority of dance being taught in the nation's schools is through physical education.....As dance has separated itself further and further from its parent discipline, that discipline has expanded into any number of specializations, leaving the area of preservice preparation in dance far behind (Hanna, 1999).

Today, dance preservice preparation continues minimally in some departments of physical education or music. Outside of arts education programs, the amount of dance is limited. The scope of this literature review cannot take in account all of the changes that were happening, generally, in physical education but there were new ideas emerging. The focus now, however, becomes movement, not dance.

Concept of Movement

Physical Education departments were able to take advantage of this growing body of research that supported movement as a way of learning because great numbers of students moved in and through conditioning, sports, and calisthenics programs. In the 1980's, the work of Howard Gardner spread and supported both physical education and dance education (Hanna, 1999). General education teachers were also taking advantage of this growing body of research and began to think of using movement to teach across the curriculum. The research had its focus on how movement enhances learning and the references to dance begin to fade out. The setting was again within physical education departments and general education classes reaching teachers, especially in the early childhood fields.

It is important to look at how this body of research has been influencing the use of movement in the classroom. Many recent articles that advocate movement come from a publication called *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*. For example, professor Connie Blakemore of Brigham Young University, remarked, "Many educators and researchers agree that the brain is activated during physical activity and that movement is essential to learning" (Blakemore, 2003, p. 1). She continues,

“Educators, physicians, parents and political leaders are some of the people who need to be educated about recent brain function discoveries that confirm that movement and physical education activities do enhance student learning” (Blakemore, 2003, p. 2). She advocates for legislation to maintain or increase the time children spend in physical education classes and related activities. In another article from this journal, Sandra Minton a professor in dance at University of Northern Colorado agrees, “Numerous research studies have shown that active learning is more effective than traditional methods in providing in-depth understanding, in teaching students how to solve problems, in stimulating their curiosity and independence, and in helping them feel more positive about school (Minton, 2003, p. 2). “Active learning” is a different way of saying movement. Minton begins by introducing a term called “movement literacy” and defines it as “the process of using human movement as a form of communication (Minton, 2003, p. 1). She feels that it is important to realize that input from the environment can be translated into movement and that movement can be read or interpreted for its meaning or meanings. She then defines “active learning”:

Using movement as part of the teaching process in this way is called “active learning.” Active learning can function as a hook to help students remember concepts and ideas. In fact, research shows that students learn best if they are actively participating, because the active-learning model encourages involvement (Minton, 2003, p. 1-2).

Active for Life is the title of a book by Stephen Sanders, Ed.D, professor and chair of the Department of Health and Physical Education at Tennessee Technological University. Sanders’ book presents reasons why movement is so important to children. It also outlines developmentally appropriate activities, a schedule of how to incorporate these,

and assessment planning. The information in this book is based on physical education standards and uses data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the content. Even though this book is aimed towards educators in physical education, some of the earlier influences of dance in education can be found. For instance in the chapter on guidelines for a new physical education he states:

Movement experiences are a primary source for learning by young children. For example as children participate in locomotor activities of walking, galloping, and skipping, they also have opportunities to express their emotions, participate socially with others, and think about and gain an understanding of how movement takes them in a variety of different directions and pathways in space (Sanders, 2002, p. 9).

“Locomotor activities”, “directions”, and “pathways” are terms from dancer Rudolph Laban’s system of analyzing movement developed during the early 20th Century in Europe. References to “emotions” and “participating socially” begin to move the ideas towards dance concepts and vocabulary. Throughout Sander’s book are short quotes by educators working with children and movement. One such quote is similar to what might be seen in a book about teaching creative dance to children:

Movement...the necessities are your bodies, your imagination, and a willingness to try...In our class we’ve moved like leaves blowing in the wind, bats flying, magnets attracting metal, caterpillars wrapping themselves in cocoons, and train engines pulling many cars (Sanders, 2002, p. 9).

In this book and in the chapter he wrote for Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year, Sanders presents a table of movement concepts with the headings *space awareness*, *body awareness* and *effort awareness* (Gullo, 2006, p. 131). The

information in this table could just as easily be seen in a book on how to teach creative dance to children; the terms and set-up are based on the work of Rudolph Laban who was influential in early dance education programs. In his chapter, Sanders highlights linking physical education activities to other curricular areas. He suggests, “Developmentally appropriate physical education programs do not isolate the teaching of movement skills from other parts of the curriculum. Rather, they improve children’s depth of learning by helping them apply physical education concepts in different contexts and practice specific skills that incorporate other forms of learning” (Gullo, 2006, p. 133). The term “active learning” seen earlier would seem to be applicable here.

Another strong advocate for movement in learning is Peter Jensen. He is a leading author and researcher in brain research. Blakeman in her article, *Movement is essential to learning*, writes these facts that come from the work of Jensen and others. In a California study she presents the known effects of exercise on the neurological system:

- The number of capillaries increases around the neurons of the brain, thus facilitating an increase in blood and oxygen. This improves the speed of recall.
- Circulation is enhanced due to increase capillaries and the transport of more oxygen and nutrients to the brain.
- Gross-motor repetitive movements stimulate the production of dopamine, a mood-enhancing neurotransmitter.
- When some exercises are performed, endorphins are released and alertness increases.

The strong push to get children moving and learning is clear. Physical education programs are using the work of Sanders, Jensen and others to propel their instruction. General education teachers are incorporating movement. Brain-based learning classes

are being offered. Physical Education teachers are creating and sharing ideas about how to use movement across the curriculum to both enhance learning and also for health.

Blakemore concludes, “The link between academic achievement, movement and physical fitness is more than supposition, as the CDE (2002) study and [others] have shown. The CDE study also concludes that physical activity can indirectly increase students’ academic performance by improving their emotional health, self esteem, and alertness (Blakemore, 2003, p. 6-7). There is a renewed effort to incorporate movement into learning, however, movement and dance are not always the same thing.

Concept of Dance

Just as there are books on movement in physical education, there are books and programs that address teaching dance as a separate subject, especially in early childhood. To name a few: Dance Technique for Children (Joyce 1984), Dance as a Way of Knowing (Zakkai 1997), Dance for Young Children (Stinson, 1988), First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children (Joyce, 1994), Rhythmic Activities and Dance (Bennet, 2006), Dances and Action Songs (Tallon, 2005), Integrating Creative Dance and Children’s Literature (Shane, 2004). There are some similarities in what is taught but one major drawback is that preservice training for dance is still not readily available. Unless an educator has a background in dance or incorporates the arts in his/her classroom, dance in the classroom is an occasional occurrence. Dance, as movement, can do all of the things that the research is showing for movement and more. Dance, as an art form, not only has an important place in education but makes a difference in child learning.

Children are innately primed to learn and share what they know through dance (Zakkai, 1997, p. 7). Jennifer Zakkai, author of Dance as a Way of Knowing, writes that movement and dance help students:

- focus and engage in learning
- apply their kinesthetic intelligence
- understand concepts and themes
- develop and refine their higher level thinking skills
- communicate in unique ways and appreciate the artistic expression of others
- develop spacial awareness
- cooperate and collaborate with each other. (Zakkai, 1997, p. 10)

Zakkai's book is full of strategies to incorporate dance into the classroom and also contains personal experiences of the impact of dance on young students. She quotes an Executive Director for Instruction who participated in one of her workshops, "[The workshop demonstrated] how the arts demand a rethinking of how we apply information. It wasn't just moving, it was translating information into movement (Zakkai, 1997, p. 11). This translation impacts learning:

- The College Board reports that for the 1999 school year students with four or more years of dance background scored 27 points higher on the averaged math and verbal scores (Cornett, 2003, p. 291).

- Third-grade science scores on tests about the water cycle were raised to 97 percent when dance was used as the meaning maker. Previous year's students scored below average on the test (Cornett 2003, p. 291).
- Seattle, Washington. Third graders who studied language arts through dance increased Metropolitan Achievement Test scores by 13 percent in six months (Cornett, 2003, p. 291).
- New York. Batoto Yetu is a Harlem children's dance company that teaches African music and dance to pass on cultural history. They say dance bridges generations and teaches discipline, respect, and hope (Cornett, 2003, p.291).

Claudia Cornett, author of Creating Meaning Through Literature and the Arts, gives several compelling reasons why to integrate dance into the classroom. 1) Dance increases sensitivity, respect, and cooperation; 2) Dance gives joy; 3) Dance increases self-regulation; 4) Dance is integral to life; 5) Dance develops self-confidence; 6) Dance is integrated brain-body work; 7) Dance is healthy; 8) Dance calls for creative problem solving and imagination; 9) Dance is a primary form of communication; 10) Dance satisfies the need for beauty, and 11) Dance is a path to cultural understanding and expression (Cornett, 2003, p. 290-294). Dance education supports a student's total development. It is a way to enhance learning, in general, but also deserves merit on its own.

This paper does not set out to persuade, one way or the other, that dance should be either in physical education or in the arts. It is clear there is a continual evolution on how to best provide teacher training programs in dance. It is logical to have movement classes

in physical education. It is also necessary to have instruction in dance beyond movement or active learning. Cornett emphasizes, "...for movement to become dance, there must be expressive interest beyond that of its mere physicality. Dance is a category of art and is not created nor understood primarily for function" (Cornett, 2003, p. 295). The arts, however, have a growing place in our educational system.

Cultures express their unique identities through the arts. As presented in Chapter I, exploring cultures through the arts is a natural way to discover and understand ourself and the world in which we live. Looking at cultures through the arts allows students to understand that people are alike and different in many ways. Understanding these important concepts is included in the Kindergarten Social Studies Standards.

In support of incorporating the arts into our educational system, there are National Standards for Arts Education. There is generally a call for reform in schools that once again may allow dance a place in every child's education. In her writing six years ago, Hanna writes:

For the first time, the United States has National Education Goals, and dance, as one of the arts (which include dance, music, theater, and the visual arts), is included in the goals as a core subject for all children. Another first is the development of voluntary National Standards for Dance Education that offer a vision of what students kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) should know and be able to do (Hanna, 1999, p. 10).

Need for Cultural Education

Before moving into why dance is such an effective way to teach about cultures, it is important to look at why teaching students about diversity, tolerance and being accepting

of differences is important. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) puts forth:

In the modern world, tolerance is more essential than ever before. It is an age marked by globalization of the economy and by rapidly increasing mobility, communication, integration, and interdependence, large-scale migrations and displacements of populations, urbanization, and changing social patterns. Since every part of the world is characterized by diversity, escalating intolerance and strife potentially menaces every region. It is not confined to any country, but is a global threat (UNESCO, 2006).

“What is tolerance?” “Tolerance is respect and acceptance of the rich diversity of the world’s cultures, forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference (UNPO, 2006). UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and People Organization) proposes that education is the most effective means of preventing intolerance (UNPO, 2006). Additionally, other people and agencies advocate early education to combat intolerance in our society.

For instance, “Childhood Education” published an article entitled *When does tolerance begin?* (Bayer, 2004). In this article Eileen Bayer and Lynn Staley, ACEI (Association for Childhood Education International) Representatives to the UN, offer this quote from Article 29 of the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989). “...the education of the child shall be directed to...the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples...” (Bayer, 2004 p. 1). Bayer and Staley also

mention that addressing quality primary education was one of UNICEF's five priorities for 2002-2005 (Bayer, 2004).

"In Context", A Quarterly of Humane Sustainable Culture, ran an article entitled *Unfinished Business*. In this article, David Koyama indicated, "Within ten years, one in three Americans will be from an ethnic minority group. The nation's 50 largest cities will have a majority student population coming from these ethnic minority groups (Koyama, 2006). Most people think that diversity is mainly an urban phenomenon. However, simply because a particular area or district doesn't have a diverse population is not reason to ignore the need for education in diversity and tolerance. The students of today move on to become the workers of tomorrow. At some point in their lives they will be studying, living or working with people that are culturally/ethnically different from themselves. Geneva Gay, author of Culturally Responsive Teaching points out that:

"Despite an increasingly diverse population, most people in the United States live in communities with others more alike than different from themselves. Students from these communities arrive at school knowing little of significance about people who are different. Yet their lives are intertwined with these "unknown others" and will become even more so in the future. If we are to avoid intergroup strife and individuals are to live the best-quality lives possible, we simply must teach students how to relate better with people from different ethnic, racial, cultural, language, and gender backgrounds (Gay, 2000, p. 20).

Lutz and Kuhlman agree:

The "rest of the world" is pluralistic and diverse with many ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions. It is the tapestry of diversity that we choose to value as we help students recognize and respect people who differ from themselves

and/or appreciate their many similarities. Learning about other cultures and ethnicities is one way to combat prejudice. As children learn about new cultures and fit their experiences with their new learning, they can appreciate all people's uniqueness and similarities and not rely on racial and ethnic generalizations (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000, p.35).

The place to begin cultural learning is with young children. Mahatma Gandhi counseled, "If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children" (Ishaq, 2004, p.41).

Using dance to explore culture and teach cultural diversity

The New York Social Studies Standards (1996) reflect the educational need for students to learn about themselves and the world around them. *Myself and Others* is the main heading and it is broken down into the following areas of content:

- My physical self includes gender, ethnicity, and languages.
- Each person has needs, wants, talents, and abilities.
- Each person has likes and dislikes.
- Each person is unique and important.
- People are alike and different in many ways.
- All people need others.
- All people need to learn and learn in different ways.
- People change over time.
- People use folktales, legends, music and oral histories to teach values, ideas and traditions (p. 21).

As suggested in Chapter I, dance is a natural and effective way to teach to these Social Study Standards. Susan Griss, in her book, Minds in Motion, writes, "In our society and

in our schools, there is much talk about respecting diverse cultures. Dance, perhaps the oldest art form of human expression, is a particularly compelling way for children to explore and experience both the universality and the particularity of those cultures” (Griss, 1998, p. 13). Noted earlier, Cornett gives several reasons to incorporate dance into curriculum. One of the reasons she gives is, “Dance is a path to cultural understanding and expression” (Cornett, 2003, p. 294). Cornett also suggests that social studies units are “particularly appropriate contexts for using dance” (Cornett, 2003, p. 294). The national dance standards include: demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods (Content Standard #5). The standards emphasize:

Through dance education, students can also come to an understanding of their own culture and begin to respect dance as a part of the heritage of many cultures. As they learn and share dances from around the globe, as well as from their own communities, children gain skills and knowledge that will help them participate in a diverse society (NSAE, 1994, p. 23).

In a yearlong study conducted by Tamara Lutz and Wilma Kuhlman, students learned about unfamiliar cultures through dance. The students began by first learning about their own identities through dance. In Level 1 (Body Awareness) they provided students with opportunities to develop both internal awareness as well as external awareness of body movements. In Level 2 (Creative Expression) students moved on to use movement to express an idea or feeling. Students were encouraged to make creative dances. Showing dances from West Africa was a way to show students how dances can tell stories. They used some of these ideas as starters for their own dances. During Level 3 (Learning Actual Dance Steps) students began to learn some specific steps. For example, basic

Native American dance steps were taught. The focus was on attempting the dances, not on mastery. Through dance, students broadened their perspectives of themselves and of the world in a way that was respectful and participatory. Lutz and Kuhlman used journal responses and carefully maintained observational records to assess the impact of using dance in their units on culture.

There were many findings in this study that support the use of dance to teach students about themselves and culture. Overall, Lutz and Kuhlman reported that when dance was used, not only did the level of the children's excitement increase but students initiated many of the discussions and learning activities following lessons. They were very involved. They also used information they were learning in other settings. Students who did not usually ask questions were inquisitive. They noticed students were independently comparing the work they had done previously in African dance with the Native American unit. Students who had been reluctant to take risks began taking risks after the dance and culture units.

The conclusion of the yearlong study was that incorporating dance into their cultural studies unit was positive. The students who participated in this study were more successful than students of previous years, when the units were taught without dance.

Lutz described these successes:

The whole process was very exciting. When students noticed their own progress and how to transfer knowledge from one area of study to another, they were excited. It was also neat to see how their sense of belonging and participation in the whole school community grew during the year. I continue to incorporate dance into my curriculum. It truly makes teaching fun (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000, p. 39).

Some other notes regarding the differences in the students in the yearlong study and students from earlier years were:

- The feeling of success for students spread into all areas of the day.
- Students related and transferred learned material to other subjects.
- There was a higher retention rate of information learned.
- Pictures that students drew, on a whole, contained great detail.
- Student's pictures showed extensive incorporation of information learned.
- Even though not all misconceptions were changed, students were open to discussions of feelings and perceptions.

There are many reasons why Lutz and Kuhlman feel dance is a dynamic and effective way to teach both personal growth and cultural understanding. Their final conclusion is worth mentioning:

Dance provides a means for expressing emotions and understanding the feelings of others, particularly as they are expressed in others' body language. When learning occurs through movement, the learning appears to last longer, and dance can be used to assist that learning. When dance is integrated into the curriculum, particularly when about other cultures, children benefit in many ways: body awareness and control, personal confidence and esteem, and cultural understanding and respect (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000, p.40).

Dance, as a way to teach culture, does seem a "natural marriage." In addition to teaching children about others, dance also teaches students about themselves.

Parts of the kindergarten standards include helping students learn about who they are. Author Sue Stinson sees dance as giving young children a chance to explore and develop an overall self-concept. This sense of “developing self” is part of a student’s discovery in answering, “Who am I?” Dance provides opportunities for students to learn about their inner selves (Stinson, 1988). Joyce believes that, “It is important for children to be aware of themselves as growing, changing beings. Movement as creative expression plays an important part in life, building self-image, self-awareness, and self-direction. This self is not only the body, not only the mind, not only the feelings – it is all of the child” (Joyce, 1994, p. 5). Dance provides opportunities for ‘exploration of self’ that are not possible in other ways.

Lutz and Kuhlman support another of Cornett’s reasons for incorporating dance into curriculum: Dance develops self-confidence. “Since each dance and dancer is unique and creative dance can never be wrong, children can always feel successful with their expressions and begin to appreciate differences” (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000, p. 36). Part of being able to tolerate differences is having strong self-esteem. The notion of gaining feelings of success and competence is very important in the development of self. Lutz and Kuhlman recognized, “As the children learned to move their bodies and gained confidence in their ability to dance, there was an increase in self-esteem (Lutz & Kuhlman, 2000, p. 37). Cornett goes on to say, “As students learn to control their bodies, endurance and strength develop, enabling them to feel more poised. Satisfaction with one’s body and self-confidence increase as students attain mastery of body parts and movements that extend their range of expression (Cornett, 2003, p. 292).

The benefits of dance are far reaching. Griss concludes, “Each elementary school child feels, experiences, knows his or her own body. By affirming the worth of this self-knowledge as a pathway to other knowledge, we can encourage children to take risks, to explore new territory, and to respect and trust themselves. Their learning will be manifold” (Griss, 1998, p. 14).

Looking at the Social Studies Standards, it is not a question of whether we need to help students discover themselves and the world around them. The question is, “How do we best teach students about themselves and the world around them?” By providing instruction in dance, teachers can offer students the opportunities needed to explore and discover their changing selves, to value differences, and to give respect to others who are also changing and learning in unique ways. Through dance, students are able to develop the self-esteem, skills, and attitudes that will allow them to share their uniqueness in the diversity of the world around them with respect, care and promise.

Chapter III

Applications and Evaluation

Introduction

The setting for my unit of study, teaching culture through dance, was a general education kindergarten classroom in a rural district west of Rochester, New York. The objective of the unit was twofold. First, the students received instruction in creative dance and second, they viewed and learned a dance of another culture. The unit was designed to address the New York State Social Studies Standards, using dance, to help students explore their own unique qualities as well as similarities and commonalities to others.

Participants

My kindergarten classroom is comprised of twenty-two students. There are fourteen girls and eight boys in the class. The students range in age from four to six years old. The average age of the class is five years nine months. I randomly chose ten students to participate in the questionnaire interview.

The random sample was comprised of seven girls and three boys. The average age for the sample group was five years one month. At the time of the interview, two students were still four years old.

Procedures

I began the year teaching the students basic introductory lessons for dance class. Students learned about safety, personal space and procedures. I then interviewed the ten selected students. Following the interviews, I presented six lessons. Each lesson was approximately thirty minutes long. The lessons were presented two times a week over a three-week period. The lessons in the unit were: Body Shapes, Levels, Walking Steps, Creating a Walking Dance, Viewing Native American Dance, and Learning a Native American Dance (Appendix E). The entire class participated in the initial lessons and the lessons during the unit of study. I then interviewed the same ten students, using the same questions, to assess their learning during the unit.

Both the pre and post assessment interviews were videotaped. I wanted to insure the accuracy of the students' responses by checking my written notes with the video. Watching the videos also allowed me to make observational notes regarding the manner in which the students answered the questions. This video documentation will also allow me to compare the responses from this sample group against future sample groups.

Instruments of study

I used a rubric to assess the questionnaire responses of the students (Appendix D). The questionnaire and rubric were broken into five categories: 1) Understanding of Differences, 2) Body Awareness, 3) Feelings about dance, 4) Background experience in dance, and 5) Exposure to dance. I used a three-point rubric system and compared the total number of points for the pre-assessment and post-assessment questionnaire. I also used observational notes to assess changes in student understanding.

I have included the questions, from the questionnaire, below to facilitate the understanding of the results shown in the next chapter.

- 1) How are you and I different?
- 2) How are you and I the same?
- 3) What body part is this? Head, finger, shoulder, elbow, back, ankle.
- 4) Which body parts do you move when you are dancing? Tell me or show me.
- 5) Do you like to dance? What do you feel when you are dancing?
- 6) Do you dance with other people? Who do you dance with? Does someone in your family dance? Tell me about it.
- 7) Where (else) have you seen dance? What was it like?
- 8) Have you seen some dance you would like to learn? Tell me about that.

Chapter IV

Results

Pre-Unit Assessment

Prior to teaching the dance unit, I administered the questionnaire (Appendix C) to the sample group. Each student's response to the eight questions, based on the rubric (Appendix D), was scored. I also calculated the average score for each question to obtain data on how the group, as a whole, scored for each question. The results of the pre-unit assessment are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Pre-Unit Results from Student Questionnaire

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Avg
Q1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0.6
Q2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0.6
Q3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2.5
Q4	3	1	3	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	1.6
Q5	2	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	1.0
Q6	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.2
Q7	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	1.0
Q8	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	0	3	1	1.7
TOTAL	14	8	15	10	7	7	12	11	14	6	10.4

- Q = Question Number
- S = Student

The results from the pre-unit assessment show that the group average score was 10.4 points out of a possible total of 24 points. Looking at the results, question by question, the table shows that certain questions had an average score much lower than others. Questions 1, 2, 5, and 7 all had scores 1.0 or below. These questions pertained to the following areas of understanding: concepts of different and same, feelings about dance and exposure to dance. Question 3, body awareness, had the highest score of 2.5. This indicates that the students had an understanding of body parts; however, in Question 4 (awareness of body parts when dancing), the score went down to 1.6 indicating that the students had less of an ability to communicate about specific body parts in relation to dancing. The average score for Question 6 was 1.2 indicating minimal background-experience in dance. The average score for Question 8 was 1.7. This question checked for a student's interest in learning more about dance.

Post-Unit Assessment

At the completion of the unit, I administered the same questionnaire to the sample group and created a table to show their rubric scores. The group average for each question was calculated as well as an average for the total questionnaire. The results of the post-unit assessment are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Post-Unit Results from Student Questionnaire

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Avg.
Q1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1.6
Q2	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	0	1.0
Q3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2.8
Q4	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	0	2.4
Q5	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1.8
Q6	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	1.8
Q7	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.9
Q8	2	2	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	2.0
TOTAL	14	14	15	17	17	16	16	16	19	9	15.3

- Q = Question
- S = Student

The results for the post-unit assessment show the group average score was 15.3 points out of a possible 24 points. The lowest average score was 1.0 for Question 2. This indicates that students are still struggling with the concept of how people are the same. The concept of how people are different addressed in Question 1 was the next lowest score (1.6). Again, the data suggests that students are struggling with this concept as well. The highest score was 2.8 for Question 3. This shows that the students, as a group, had a high level of skill in naming specific body parts. Additionally, the rubric score for

Question 4 was only 0.4 points lower, indicating a growing ability to transfer this knowledge when looking at their bodies while dancing. The remaining average rubric scores are close to 2.0. Questions 5 and 6 had rubric scores of 1.8. Questions 9 had an average rubric score of 1.9 and Question 8, had an average rubric score of 2.0.

Table 3 shows the difference in the averaged scores between the pre-unit assessment and post-unit assessment; Graph 1 illustrates these differences visually.

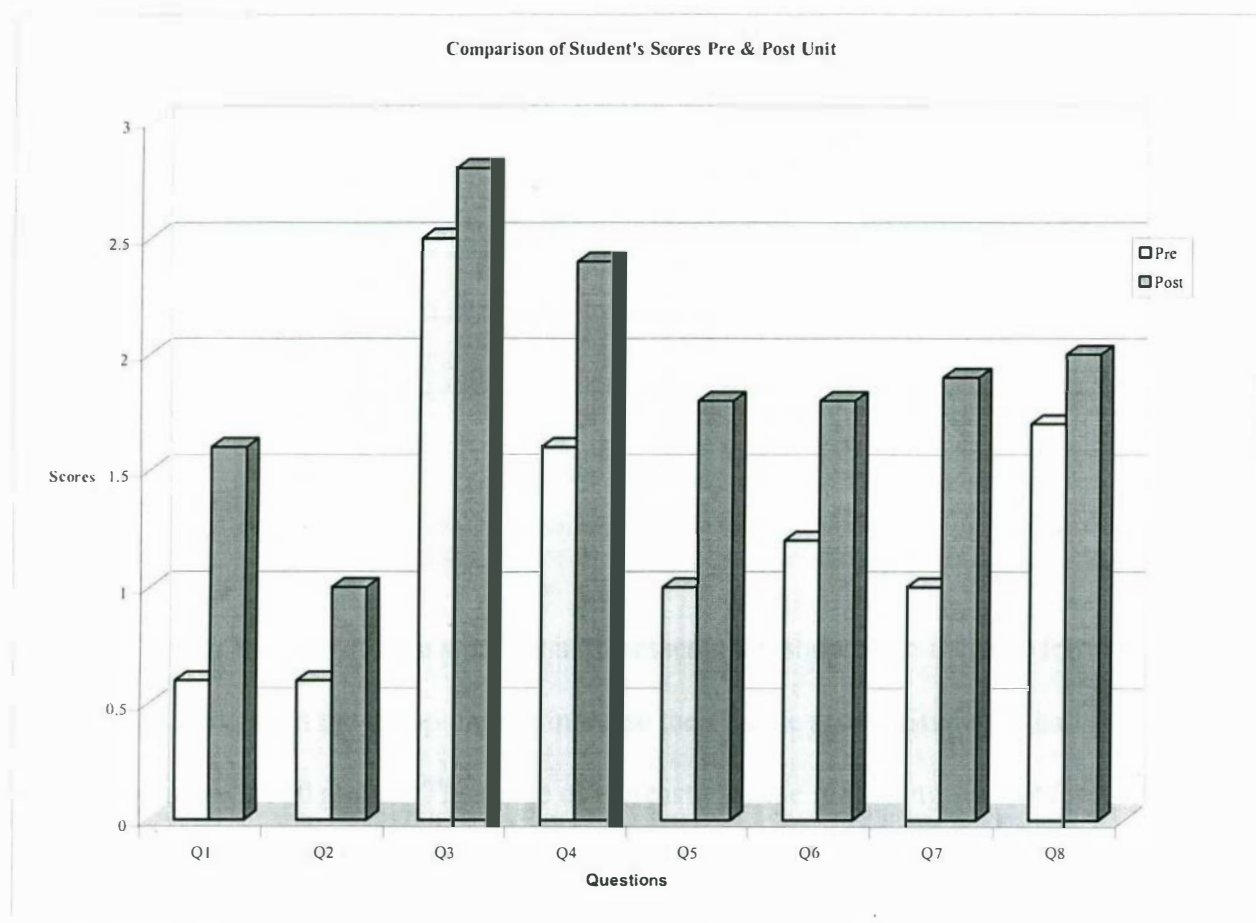
Table 3

Comparison of Pre and Post Group Average Rubric Scores

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8		
Pre-Unit	0.6	0.6	2.5	1.6	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.7		
Post-Unit	1.6	1.0	2.8	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0		
Difference	+1.0	+0.4	+0.3	+0.8	+0.8	+0.6	+0.9	+0.3		

- Q = Question Number

Graph 1



In comparing the pre and post unit assessments, the results show that, as a group, the students increased their rubric scores after participating in the unit. Looking at the comparison, question by question, it is clear that certain areas show a greater difference in scores than others. In Question 1, there was an averaged increase of 1 point. Of all the questions, this was the greatest difference. Questions 3 and 8 had the smallest difference of 0.3. These were two questions that had higher pre-unit assessments to begin with. The balance of the questions show a range of 0.4 to 0.9 increase in rubric scores.

The results of the data also show a general increase in the rubric scores for each student. Table 4 shows the results broken down by student.

Comparison of Pre and Post Student Rubric Scores

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Pre-Unit	14	8	15	10	7	7	12	11	14	6
Post-Unit	14	14	15	17	17	16	16	16	19	9
Difference	0	+6	0	+7	+10	+9	+4	+5	+5	+3

- S = Student

Table 4 shows that 80% of the students in the assessment showed an increase in rubric scores. Two students in the group did not increase their rubric score. Student 5 had the highest increase with 10 points. The range of increases for the remaining students were 3 to 9 points. Although the specific student's scores show an individual's growth, they are based on the total points and so do not show responses to the specific questions as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

In the following chapter, I will look more closely at the results of the data and draw some specific conclusions from the general results.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this thesis was to create a unit of study, using dance, to address the New York State Social Studies Standards. At the kindergarten level, one key component of these standards is to help students develop an awareness of themselves as growing individuals. A second key component is to support students in learning about other cultures. My objective was to add to the body of research in dance by developing a unit of study that would begin to teach students about themselves and begin to introduce them to another culture.

I also wanted to determine if there would be tangible results from such a unit of study. After gathering all the data, I looked at each question and used the approach of viewing the results in such a way as to find areas where the students already had a knowledge base and also what were the areas of growth as well as the areas of difficulty. By analyzing the results of the pre and post unit assessments, I have been able to draw some conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the unit I developed and the growth of the students.

Questions 1 and 2 were based on the students being able to communicate things that were different and the same between us. The rubric scores were the lowest scores in both the pre and post assessments. Most of the answers were based on what the student could see at that moment. For instance, answers included differences in our sizes, hair length/color, and shoe or clothing differences. The students were not able to move beyond the concrete into the abstract and some had difficulty even answering the

questions. This makes sense developmentally. Yet, Question 1 represented the largest rubric gain. Also interesting, is that Question 2 had the same pre assessment score as Question 1 but did not gain as much in the post assessment. Talking about what was the same between us was even more difficult than talking about the differences. As mentioned, the average age for the sample group was barely five years old. For the students to gain a firm grasp of this concept, it will take time and many examples. This is all the more reason to be exploring the ways in which people are the same and different because when they are developmentally ready to tackle such an idea, they will have a wealth of examples and experiences to pull from.

Question 3, which covered body awareness, scored high to begin with and increased slightly (0.3) after the unit. It is an area of knowledge fairly developed in this sample group and an area where they can build on their current knowledge. It was interesting to note that in the pre assessment there was less ability to name specific body parts that they use when they are dancing (Question 4). In the pre assessment, answers included not knowing, general terms like ‘everything’ and single body part answers. In the post assessment, answers included a variety of named body parts. The rubric increase of 0.8 indicates that not only did students have more awareness of their bodies, they were able to identify several body parts engaged when dancing.

Question 5 showed an increase of 0.8 and indicates that, generally, the students responded not only that they liked to dance but were also able to name a feeling about how they felt when they danced. In the pre assessment, one particular student (a boy with an older brother) very quickly answered “no” when asked if he liked to dance. In the post assessment, his answer was “I guess so” after giving it some thought. He did not want to

say “no” but also was not totally comfortable saying “yes”. This is also the same student who at the beginning of our first dance class watched, with hesitation, and soon realized it was acceptable to dance. He then thoroughly enjoyed himself. For this question, it was satisfying to see not just the increase in scores but the confidence in their answers.

Questions 6 and 7 had to do with background experience and exposure to dance. Students were much more able to answer these questions after the unit. Some students made reference to previous class work, as examples, and others seemed to have a newly found vocabulary to communicate about outside experiences. In the post assessment, when asked to describe dance they had seen, most students used body part names and movement vocabulary. This was an area of increased understanding from pre to post assessment answers. This is also reflected in the rubric with an increased score by 0.9 points.

Question 8 showed an increase in rubric points by 0.3. The pre assessment score was high (1.7) and the post assessment score was the third highest (2.0). Only the body awareness scores were higher (2.8 and 2.4). The scores were mostly unchanged pre to post. Also, students could score one point just for being able to answer, even if the response was negative that they wanted to learn about a dance. For those students who had seen dance and responded they wanted to learn, there was more of an ability to describe the dance. It is encouraging to see that the students have an enhanced ability to communicate about dance.

Overall, the unit of instruction was effective. I believe that more time is needed both, developmentally and experientially, for the students to gain the full benefit of having dance as part of their curriculum. The students are young and just beginning to explore

who they are. As they do this and incorporate exploring other cultures, they are poised for a path not only to learn how special they are but also how unique each is.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

The crux of this process has been my learning. As an educator, I support arts integration in education. My work on this project has given me a greater base of knowledge to pursue my work and advocacy in this area. As part of my final thoughts I have reflected on both the benefits of this process and also, based on my learning, some additions or changes that I might make.

It has been very beneficial to explore the history of dance in education. This broad perspective helps me better understand the current challenges that dance, as an art form, in education faces and the progress that has been made over time. I am also more aware of the network of people and organizations involved in advocating for arts education, specifically in dance. Becoming part of this network has allowed me to see that the work I do contributes to the larger efforts of arts education. Through the process of researching my topic, I have recently discovered a new database of arts research. Having access to this will allow me to have access to information not contained in more general databases. This will allow me to find more research and writing by others that align with the work I am doing. I look forward to having more references to investigate.

I have gained basic skills in designing and implementing a study. I have also learned how I might make changes or incorporate additional information in future studies. I looked at my expectations and some of the areas of difficulty.

I expected that the students would have more of a sense of how we are the same and different. I do think, as mentioned in Chapter IV, the developmental stage of the students impacted their ability to grasp this concept. However, in looking at my lesson objectives and the percent of lesson time spent on specifically looking at the same/different concept, I see that it was minimal. This is a factor I did not notice until further investigation.

Originally, I had envisioned introducing three different cultures to the students. However, the creative dance lessons were important for body awareness and vocabulary development. Given my time framework, I was not able to present as many concrete examples as I had originally planned. In the future, I would make the time framework longer. This would allow me to devote more lesson time to this specific objective. Comparing the data I have from my current study with future studies will allow me to isolate more information on developmental expectations vs. time spent on objectives. In the future, I might also do this study using a sample of older children. Additionally, I could interview my sample group in this study at the end of kindergarten. Since the children in this study were very young and came to school with such a variety of skill levels, I have thought about looking at the receptive and expressive language skill level of each student in the sample group. This information would be possible to obtain from a speech and language professional and would provide additional information for evaluating the data.

Each lesson I present and each group of students I work with, I learn something new. It is an opportunity to clarify my objectives and to align my outcomes with this. With this in mind, the categories of questions and the questions within the categories might also change.

Beyond the fact that this study has been meaningful to me, it also has presented me with the opportunity to enrich my teaching. All that I have learned through this process has impacted my knowledge in teaching and will continue to shape my approach of integrating the arts in curriculum.

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Appendix A

New York Social Studies Standards

Level K-Content Understandings

Identity, Change and Culture Concepts/Themes

Myself and others

My physical self includes gender, ethnicity, and languages.

Each person has needs, wants, talents and abilities.

Each person has likes and dislikes.

Each person is unique and important.

People are alike and different in many ways.

All people need others.

All people need to learn and learn in different ways.

People change over time.

People use folktales, legends, music, and oral histories to teach values, ideas, and traditions.

New York State Standards for Social Studies (1996, p. 21)

Appendix B

National Dance Achievement Standards

- #1. Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
 - a. accurately demonstrate nonlocomotor/axial movements (such as bend, twist, stretch, swing)
 - b. accurately demonstrate eight basic locomotor movements (such as walk, run, hop, jump, leap, gallop, slide, and skip), traveling forward, backward, sideward, diagonally, and turning
 - c. create shapes at low, middle, and high levels
 - d. demonstrate the ability to define and maintain personal space
 - e. demonstrate movements in straight and curved pathways
 - f. demonstrate accuracy in moving to a musical beat and responding to changes in tempo
 - g. demonstrate kinesthetic awareness, concentration, and focus in performing movement skills
 - h. attentively observe and accurately describe the action (such as skip, gallop) and movement elements (such as levels, directions) in a brief movement study

- #5. Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods
 - a. perform folk dances from various cultures with competence and confidence
 - c. accurately answer questions about dance in a particular culture and time period (for example, In colonial America, why and in what settings did people dance? What did the dances look like?)

National Standards for Arts Education (1994, p. 23-24)

Appendix C

Student Questionnaire for Unit on Cultural Understanding

<u>Category</u>	<u>Question</u>
Understanding Differences	Q1: How are you and I different? Q2: How are you and I the same?
Body Awareness	Q3: What body part is this? (head, finger, shoulder, elbow, back, ankle) Q4: Which body parts do you move when you are dancing? Tell me or show me.
Feelings About Dance	Q5: Do you like to dance? What do you feel when you are dancing?
Background Experience in Dance	Q6: Do you dance with other people? Who do you dance with? Does someone in your family dance? Tell me about it.
Exposure to Dance	Q7: Where (else) have you seen dance? What was it like? Q8: Have you seen some dance you would like to learn? Tell me about that.

Appendix D

RUBRIC OF ASSESSMENT FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

(A score of 3 is considered the highest and a score of 0 is considered the lowest.)

(Total number of points 24)

Understanding of differences: Does the student have an understanding that we, as people, have differences with regards to physical appearance, beliefs, and cultural practices (Questions 1 and 2)?

SCORE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Student is able to note several points of how people are the same and different with elaboration to show an understanding that we are all people. |
| 2 | Student is able to note 2-3 concrete examples of some things that are the same and different with no elaboration. |
| 1 | Student is able to provide 1 example of how people are the same and different. |
| 0 | Student is unable to answer. |

Body Awareness: Student is able to correctly name body parts (Question 3 - out of 6 parts).

SCORE

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 3 | 5-6 out of 6 |
| 2 | 3-4 out of 6 |
| 1 | 1-2 out of 6 |
| 0 | Student is unable to answer. |

Body Awareness: (Question 4)

SCORE

- 3 Student is able to name 3 or more body parts they use when dancing.
- 2 Student is able to name 2 body parts they use when dancing.
- 1 Student is able to name 1 body part they use when dancing.
- 0 Student is unable to answer.

Feelings about dance: Student has a view of self as dancer and is aware that dancing can create or express feelings (Question 5).

SCORE

- 3 Student is able to express feelings about dance. Student uses vocabulary to communicate 2-3 feelings.
- 2 Student is able to communicate 1 feeling about dance.
- 1 Student is unable to use vocabulary to communicate.
- 0 Student is unable to answer.

Background experience in dance: Student or a family member has participated in dance and the student has background experience that provides current understanding of dance (Question 6).

SCORE

- 3 Student has had personal experience in dance and is able to communicate this using examples.
- 2 Student has one example of personal or familial experience in dance.
- 1 Student is unable to share a personal experience with dance.
- 0 Student is unable to answer.

Exposure to dance: Student indicates additional exposure to dance (Question 7).

SCORE

- 3 Student has seen dance (on T.V., at a performance) and is able to communicate this experience.
- 2 Student has not seen formal dance but has viewed dance in a broader context (i.e. cheerleading, sports).
- 1 Student has not seen any dance.
- 0 Student is unable to answer.

Student demonstrates an interest to learn more about a kind of dance (Question 8).

SCORE

- 3 Student has an interest in learning more about dance and can give a specific example of style or type of dance.
- 2 Student has an interest in learning more about dance but cannot provide specific example or elaboration.
- 1 Student has no interest in learning more about dance.
- 0 Student is unable to answer.

Appendix E

Lessons

Overview of Lessons and Learning Categories:

Lesson	Addresses Learning Related to:
Lesson 1 – “Shapes”	Q3, Q4 Body Awareness Q5 Feeling About Dance
Lesson 2 – “Level”	Q3, Q4 Body Awareness Q5 Feeling About Dance
Lesson 3 & 4 – “Exploring Walking”	Q4 Body Awareness Q5 Feeling About Dance Q6 Background Experience in Dance
Lesson 5 – “Viewing Dance”	Q1, Q2 Understanding Differences Q7, Q8 Exposure to Dance
Lesson 6 – “Wishita”	Q1-Q8 All of the Above

LESSON: SHAPES
GRADE LEVEL: K

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED: DANCE

Grades K-4

Content Standard #1 – Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance: c,g,h.

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The student will:

be able to create shapes with their bodies and hold these shapes in space.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- drum

SET:

Sitting in circle at center of dance space. “We have been working with lines and curves and you are all line experts. Where do we see lines and curves? Yes, in letters and numbers. Yes, in shapes. Yes, around the room and in things. We can make our bodies into different shapes using the lines we know about.” [As part of the warm-up begin making some shapes with arms.] “Make straight lines with your arms and reach up to the ceiling. Now can you make curved lines with your arms, still reaching up? [Do several variations of shapes you can make with your arms. Then move on to hands and fingers. Curve and straighten back. Move on to legs. Standing, go through several more warm-up shapes.] “Today we are going to make shapes with our bodies at our home base.” [Have the students move to sitting at the side of the room. Have the red group move to their home base. Mark home base and be ready to begin.]

1. “For our warm-up we were making shapes thinking about lines. We can also think about making shapes that are big and wide or that are little and small. Now, I want you to think about making the biggest, widest shape you can make - still thinking about lines and curves. Wow, I see some fabulous big shapes. Now, I want you to make a little, small shape with your body. Yes, I see _____ has made a very tiny shape. Try another big shape.” [Let students explore a couple more times and then switch groups. Remember to use student’s names to comment on what you see. This is a way to give feedback and also to establish vocabulary of describing movement.]
2. “Red group, we are now going to listen to the drum and slowly move to a big shape and then slowly to a small shape. I will beat the drum 4 times; you will take 4 drum beats to get to your big shape. Then you will have 4 drum beats to get to your small shape. Remember to freeze in your shape at the end of the

4 drum beats. Ready, here we go.” [Beat the drum slowly 4 times as students move to shape, pause, and then instruct them to move to their small shape on 4 drum beats. Repeat twice and then move to only 2 drum beats. Then move to only 1 drum beat. Switch groups.]

3. “Red group, lets try it one more time. ‘Blue’ group, I want you to watch and be able to tell me about the kinds of shapes you saw and what body parts were making the shapes.” [After red group has repeated the above sequence, ask blue group to share what they saw. Switch groups and reverse roles.]
4. “Everyone did a wonderful job making shapes with their bodies. You also did a great job watching your classmates and describing the shapes you saw. Please, everyone come back to the circle.” [Have students meet in circle area.]
5. “Did you know that you could make so many shapes with your bodies? Who wants to share about a shape they enjoyed making?” [Remember to ask how making that particular shape made them feel.] “Who wants to share about a shape they saw that they want to try?”
6. [Let students share and bring the lesson to an end.] “Next class we will work more with shapes and explore how we can make shapes in different spaces. Great job today boys and girls!”

ASSESSMENT:

1. Was the student able to make big shapes/small shapes?
2. Was the student able to follow directions in working with the drum and finding shapes?
3. Was student able to participate in discussions?

Lesson 2

LESSON: LEVELS GRADE LEVEL: K

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED: DANCE

Grades K-4

Content Standard #1 – Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance: c,d,g.

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The student will:

be able to move at the following levels – low, mid, and high.

MATERIALS:

- picture cards of animals, insects, reptiles that are at different levels
- easle
- drum
- music

SET:

Warm up: Play *Simon Says* and have students get their bodies moving. Then have students sit at circle area. Lay out picture cards. “Who can see an animal that moves low to the ground?” [worm, snake, crab] “Who can see an animal that stretches up high?” [giraffe, ostrich] “Excellent, and who can see an animal that moves in the middle? [dog, cat] “Yes, these animals are showing us different levels. We call the levels high, middle and low. Can everyone stand up and make a shape at a high level? Now find a shape at the middle level. Lastly, find a shape at the low level. Today we are going to practice moving on different levels.”

1. [Put the picture cards up at three different spots in the room. Space them out so there is distance between them.] “You are going to march from picture to picture. When you get to the picture, you will move at the level that picture shows. So, if I am at the picture of the snake, I will move down close to the ground. You can think about how the snake moves and use some of that movement but you can also make up your own.” [Have students move to side of the room. Call the red group to get ready to march. Put on the music.]
2. [Switch groups and let the blue group have a turn. Remember to use student names and descriptive movement vocabulary as you comment on the different movements that you see. Let each group go a couple times.]
3. [Bring the students back to the circle.] “Who enjoyed moving at a low level? Who enjoyed moving at the middle level? How about the high level? Can someone show me a movement they liked at the low level?” [Give several

children a chance to demonstrate. Have the other children comment on what they saw in terms of level, body parts that moved, and kinds of movements.] “You all did a great job. What are the levels that we learned today? Whenever we are dancing we can think about what levels.”

ASSESSMENT:

- 1) Was the student able to move at each level?
- 2) Was the student able to name the three levels and give an example of each level?

LESSON: WALKING (FORWARD, BACKWARD, SIDEWAYS)
GRADE LEVEL: K
PART ONE

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED: DANCE

Grades K-4

Content Standard #1 – Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance: b, d, e, g.

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The learner will:

be able to, with intention, walk forward, backward and sideways.

MATERIALS:

- miniature car
- ball

SET:

Students are seated at circle area. “We have been talking about shapes and levels. Today we are going to talk about a movement that you can all do – walking. In fact, we all walked to class together today, didn’t we? But, when we bring a walk into dance class, it changes. We can walk, just to walk (like to class) OR we can walk and really think about how we are walking. We can draw all our attention to how we are walking. We can even try it here, sitting down. We can lift our arm with out thinking about it or we can really pay attention to how we are lifting it and it becomes more like dance. Let’s try it.” [Let children explore raising their arm. Then let the children begin walking and talk as they walk.] “Start slow and really pay attention. [Let children walk for a couple minutes and then have them stop.] “We can also explore different ways to walk. We know different levels now; we know that we can be big and wide or small and little. We can use all these things we know when we explore walking. As our warm-up, I want you to walk around the room.” [Let children begin walking and talk as they walk.] “Notice if your arms are swinging. Notice are you taking big or little steps. Is your head held high or looking down? Are you walking fast or slow? Keep it a walk. Pay attention to how you are moving.”

1. [Have children walk back to the circle area.] “You did a great job exploring the different ways you can walk. In fact, as we practice some more, I think we should make a Room 205 walking dance. Does this sound like a good idea? First, we will explore walking forward, backward and sideways. I am going to show you, with this car and ball, what I mean by these words, forward, backward and sideways. How can I make this car move?” [Forward – demonstrate and backwards – demonstrate.] “I can also choose to have the car move

slow/fast/with lots of little stops.” [Demonstrate all the ways.] “Did I forget any ways?” “How about the ball. I can make the ball move forward, backward and.....sideways.” [Demonstrate]

2. “Let’s all stand up and stand on this line. I’ll know you are ready when your eyes are on me. O.K., let’s all slowly walk forward for 6 steps. Good. Now let’s all slowly, carefully walk backwards 6 steps. Good. Let’s try that one more time.
3. “Now, let’s think about the different ways we can walk forward and backward. Go ahead and explore the different ways you can walk. Think back to the cars and ball. Think back to everything you know about levels. You should only be walking forward or backward.” [Notice a couple students who are doing a walk that can be copied by other children.] “_____ is walking like this. Can everyone try this? We should put this in our dance. “_____ is walking like this. Can everyone try this? We are getting a lot of material for our dance.”
4. “Now, I would like everyone to explore walking sideways. How can you move sideways and keep it a walk?” [Again, look for a couple ideas to share with the class that everyone can copy.]
5. [Head back to the circle.] “Boys and girls, you did an amazing job at exploring walks today!! We even have enough ideas to make our own walking dance. It will be a dance to feel proud of, moving together as a class. Great work today!!”

ASSESSMENTS:

1. Did the student understand the directions of forward, backward and sideways?
2. Did the student create a variety of walks?

PART TWO

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The student will:

be able learn and perform Room 205’s Walking Dance.

SET: “Boys and girls, I thought about all the walking steps you came up with and today I will put some of these together to show you how we can make a dance.

- 1) [Have the red group stand on a line in the room. The blue line will be the audience to start.] “Red group please make sure you have some space between the person next to you and yourself. We will start with _____’s forward step. Everyone (this next part will depend on the steps decided upon) bend your knees so that you are ready to walk at a

- mid level. We will take 8 step forward keeping our knees bent so we can stay in the mid level.” [Students walk forward.]
- 2) “Now, remember how _____ bent forward and reached his hands up to the ceiling? Please do that now.” [Illustrate with your own body.] “We will do our 8 backward steps holding this shape.” [Walk backwards.]
 - 3) “ We are right back where we started. We will now do our side step. Watch first. Remember _____ did quick little side steps with her body bent over.” [Show students as talking. These were all steps practiced in the previous lesson so the students have some familiarity with them.] “Try this with me for 4 counts.”
 - 4) “Excellent. And now, we will finish with _____’s step. Remember how he went up to a high level and crossed one foot in front of the other? Try this now with me for 4 counts.” [Model with students.]
 - 5) “I think you are ready to try the walks one after the other.” [With students.] “Walk forward for 8 counts, back for 8 counts, this side for 4 counts and to the other side for 4 counts. That is wonderful. Now let’s give the blue group a chance to learn Room 205’s Dance.”
 - 6) [Repeat process with the blue group. Give each group another chance to perform at least 2 times.]
 - 7) “You all did a fantastic job learning Room 205’s Dance. Next time we meet we will look at a video of some dances that use walking steps. I wonder if we will see any of the walking steps that you all explored?”

ASSESSMENT:

- 1) Were the students able to follow directions to put the 4 different walking steps together?
- 2) Were the students able to hold the different shapes with their bodies while they performed the walking steps?

Lesson 5

LESSON: VIEWING DANCES OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE GRADE LEVEL: K

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Grade K

Theme: Identity

Content: Myself and others – People are alike and different in many ways

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED: DANCE

Grades K-4

Content Standard #5 Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods: c.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

be able to identify walking directions and steps in the Native American dance that are similar to and different from the directions and steps they did in Lesson 4.

The student will:

be able to compare other elements of the Native American dance to the dance they did in Lesson 4.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- VCR and television
- video of Native American Dances (Dance In America, The American Indian Dance Theatre: Finding the Circle, ©1990 Thirteen/WNET And Tatge Lasseur Productions, Inc.)

SET:

“Yesterday, we learned Room 205’s Dance which was based on the walking steps you all created. Today, I want to show you some dances that use walking steps. I wonder if we will see any of the steps that we did?”

- 1) “As you watch the video, I want you to look for walking steps that the dancers are doing. Notice if the dancers are moving forward, backward or sideways. Notice if they are making any shapes with their bodies as they walk.” [Show the first excerpt – the dancers walking to prepare for a pow-wow.]
- 2) [In response to students. Prompt if necessary.] “Yes, the dancers are walking forward slowly. They have their knees slightly bent and their bodies are upright. Yes, those young dancers are walking sideways just like we did in our dance!”
- 3) [Show the excerpt from the end of The Eagle Dance and take/prompt comments about what the dancers are doing.]
- 4) [Finally, show the very end of the video (almost where the credits are rolling) and again, take comments/prompts of similarities.]

- 5) “We have seen many things in these dances that are just like the walks we did! You also noticed many other things that were very perceptive. Now, I want you to think about some of the things that are different about the dances we just saw. What kind of things did you notice that were not like our walking dance?” [Some of the dances were outside. The dancers had costumes. They were hopping. They had drumming and singing. They moved in circles.]
- 6) “You all did an amazing job noticing things that were different. So, we noticed things that were both the same and different about the Native American walking dances and our walking dance. Isn’t it exciting that we say the same kinds of movements that you all came up with in another dance? Next class I will teach you a Native American dance that is a circle dance. I can’t wait to hear what you think!”

ASSESSMENT:

- 1) Did the students notice similarities between their own experiences and the dances they saw?
- 2) Were the students able to communicate these verbally?
- 3) Did the students notice differences between their own experiences and the dances they saw?
- 4) Were the students able to communicate these verbally?

Lesson 6

LESSON: CULTURAL FOCUS Wishita GRADE LEVEL : K

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Level K

Theme: Culture

Content: Myself and others – People use dance, folktales, legends, music, and oral histories to teach values, ideas and traditions.

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED: DANCE

Grades K-4

Content Standard #1 Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance: b, c, e, f, g.

Content Standard #5 Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods: a.

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The student will:

be able perform the Native American group circle dance *Wishita*.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- song used for dance
- drum (if desired)
- ribbon to tie around the right ankle to help students know their right from their left
- ankle bells

SET:

[Begin singing Wishita and the children will join in.] “Girls and boys, today we will learn the dance that goes with the song that we already learned. The dance is also from the Native American culture and is danced to increase energy. It is a circle dance, which we have learned, is very common in many different cultures.”

- 1) “Before we make our circle, we will warm-up. Spread out so that you have some room to move through the space. Let’s skip in circles – make them big and small. Now stretch up high and bend down low. Again, make a big, extended shape and now flex in and make a very small shape. Standing up again, how big can you make circles with your arm? Try one arm and then the other. Go ahead and switch directions. Can you make circles with your arms and move through space at the same time? Find a place to stop and roll your shoulders – change directions. Now swing your arms to the front and up

- and back down. Slow this down. Make it smaller and smaller until you are standing still.”
- 2) “Good job boys and girls! I am going to show you the step I want you to do as you travel in a circular pathway. Please stand where you can see me. First just watch.” [Facing the students, verbalize as you do the movement *step-together-step* moving sideways. “Now you can try this with me.” [Have students move in your mirror image as you continue to model.] “Nice job!! I am going to quickly pass out a band to put on your ankle. Please put it on your right ankle. If you look to the front of the room, it will be the ankle on this side.” [Monitor that children have the band on the correct ankle.]
 - 3) “Please join hands to form a circle. We will be moving to our right. Can everyone turn his/her head to the direction we will be moving? Yes, that is correct. We will keep holding hands for this dance. Now listen to my voice as I keep the tempo and we will all move together. Please get ready to move the foot that has the band on it. Rea-dy here we go....*step-together-step*, keep going....*step-together-step*....*step-together-step*....excellent, keep it going. [Keep tempo very slow, as children learn the step.]
 - 4) “O.K. Now we can shake our hands out. Keep your circle shape. On this next part, we will all walk into the circle and then out again. Pretend that there is a soft circular wall in the middle so that we don’t crash. Holding hands, we will take 8 steps in and 8 steps out. Let’s start with the foot that has the band on it. Rea-dy here we go....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, and back out 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Let’s try again and this time keep going in and out a second time. Rea-dy here we go....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, and back out 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Again 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, and back out 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Fabulous.”
 - 5) “Now as we try this part again, I want you to bend your knees as you walk in and out of the circle. I also want you to lift your hands and arms as you walk into the circle and bring them back down as you walk out. Let’s try this.” [Repeat above walking directions but with the additions.]
 - 6) “We are ready to try the dance! We will move with our *step-together-step* for 4 counts of 8. Then we will add the walking into the middle and back out. We will do this 2 times and then repeat the circle pathway *step-together-step*. Start with the foot that has the band on it....rea-dy here we go.....” [Lead students slowly through the dance.]
 - 7) “Now we will try the dance with our song. If it is hard to do both, for now, then concentrate on the movement and I will do most of the singing. In our song, the *wishita* part is the part where we travel in our circular pathway. The *washa-ta-neya* part is the part that we move in straight pathways in and out. Let’s try it all together. [As a participant in the circle, lead the students through the dance along with the song.]
 - 8) “Girls and boys, you are doing a fabulous job. Now I will pass out bells for your ankles. When you get your bells, you may explore how they sound as you walk around. When I clap, this is your cue to stand still. Let’s practice this.” [Let students begin to move and then clap. Check for understanding and repeat 2 or 3 times.] “Take 1 more minute to move around and then I would like you to form a circle again. When I am talking, you are to be still,

otherwise, you won't be able to hear me. I hope that everyone will be in control of their feet so they can use the bells." [Have students finish and move into a circle formation. Clap.] O.K. Let's try the dance from the beginning.

- 9) [Lead students through the dance. After dance collect bells and sit in a circle to share thoughts about the dance.]

ASSESSMENT:

- 1) Did the student perform the step-together-step movement?
- 2) Did the student perform the above movement while traveling in a circular pathway?
- 3) Was student able to walk a straight pathway into the middle of the circle and back out?
- 4) Was the student able to add the bent knees and arms with this last movement?
- 5) Was the student able to sing the song while performing the dance?
- 6) Was the student able to use the bells responsibly?
- 7) Did the student have any comments about learning/performing the dance?