Teaching Music Through Movement and Dance
A Music Curriculum for Elementary School Grades K-5

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Abstract

I created a curriculum that includes using dance to teach musical concepts because the literature makes it clear that students learn best through movement. Much of the framework for the general music curriculum leaves much room for interpretation for teachers. Often, teachers create lessons that they will continue to use year after year, regardless of changes in students, available resources, current culture, or music.
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Introduction

Movement in the music classroom provides students a new way to understand and physically represent musical concepts and rhythms. Through movement, students activate all areas of their brain creating an all-encompassing type of workout for their mind. Every child should have the opportunity to learn in a manner that will educate them physically and mentally. As is with many school subjects, not all music lessons can be the ‘favorite’ or ‘coolest’. However, by adding in movement, specifically in the form of dance to some of the more basic concepts in music, the students may become more engaged.

As a dancer of 23 years, I believe that dancing helps students embody the rhythms, pulse, feeling, and purpose of music. I have set to create a unit of dance based solely in types of dance in order to further teach musical concepts in a non-traditional sense. Upon researching the benefits of movement in various music and general education classrooms, I found the long term effects to be beneficial. Using this knowledge, I developed lessons which would teach students the 4 core forms of dance, and also further their knowledge of musical concepts such as steady beat, rhythm study, dynamics, and expression. These lessons are the framework for any elementary music classroom; general, choral, or instrumental. They embody the ideals and fundamentals of using movement and dance to further musical learning.
Literature Review

The Effectiveness of Movement in the Music Classroom

I am not your typical elementary music teacher. In my school, I have the privilege of teaching a combined position of both music and dance, but not in the traditional sense. I have no set curriculum other than the guidelines of general and exploratory music for the county. This particular position has granted me the title of ‘movement & music’. My classes are founded on movement based activities that will help students conceptualize concepts such as steady beats, rhythms, form, and tempo. In my classroom, students are achieving at higher levels of learning because of their constant mental and physical involvement in the lesson. Is this level of achievement simply due to the lessons? Or is there perhaps a stronger correlation between the need for lesson based movement and achievement? In this article, the effectiveness of movement in the general and music classrooms will be examined in order to justify the need for movement in the music classroom.

Defining Movement

Movement, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is an act of changing physical location or position or having this changed (Webster, 2016). According to scientific research, movement is a necessity in creating a muscle memory for children (Jensen, 2005). With some sort of movement, regardless of how small, there can be increased mental connection. For example, when toddlers want to go someplace themselves quickly, they process how to stand and walk. Without the first step however, the brain cannot process the idea of covering space and moving. The act of moving sets the memory.
Scientific Research

This notion of moving to enhance learning is further supported by scientific research. Body movement is a cardinal facet and the first observable dimension in human behavior (Jacobson, Jones, Taylor, & Munter, 1970). Research showed that when the body was in motion, the cerebellum was functioning at a higher level than when the body was at rest. That was due to the fact that there was more blood flow to the brain at times of movement, and therefore more oxygen being transported (Jensen, 2005; Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). Because of the improved blood and oxygen levels in the brain during activity, research also supported a correlation between movement and memory during those times. The voluntary exercise or movement influenced gene expression which translated into enhanced encoding, transfer of data, and synaptic structure, both which facilitated learning and created a muscle memory (Jensen, 2005). Other benefits of increased movement based activities in the classroom included increased cognition and a more positive attitude and behavior in school since there were less “lethal” consequences when performing a movement activity verses a worksheet or test (Jensen, 2005).

Movement in General Education Classrooms

In general education classes, movement has been successfully utilized in the four main areas of study; English, History, Science, & Mathematics to create a muscle memory. In English, many novels in the curriculum lent themselves to be re-enacted during class. Whether as an entire class or in groups, students would embody the characters they were learning about
through dramatic reading and staging, thus feeling more connected to the characters and enabling a stronger retention rate of the novel’s content (Dimondson, 1985; Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). This enacting also resulted in growth in improved reading skills, as students were taking more responsibility for their part in the movement production (Keinanen, Hetland, & Winner, 2000).

History classes were formatted similarly to English classes. Students in these classes were actively engaged in this area by re-enacting events from the Gold Rush. Students were then evaluated on their learning by recalling events from the event based on the muscle memory they developed from acting out the various scenes (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002).

Science classes utilized movement through rhythmic poems in order to memorize elements or new vocabulary. Students would create poems, then move to a steady beat pattern to create the muscle memory needed to perform those poems (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). In addition, students would also create small groups to recall elements from the periodic table. By grouping themselves into various elements shapes to create a substance, students were able to recall chemical make up with ease (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002).

In the area of mathematics, specifically tessellations, body movements that mimicked the shapes the students saw on paper helped to reinforce and create a muscle memory (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). Students were also able to gain a higher level of thinking when creating these body tessellations by increasing their movement and mathematics vocabulary.
The students could then describe shape movement by floor pattern, range, directional change, and level change (Complo, 1967).

**Movement in Special Area & Music Classes**

With the success of incorporating movement into academic subjects, it seemed helpful to extend the movement opportunities into other ‘special area’ subjects. These special areas included physical education, art, and music.

In physical education classes, it was expected that students were moving while playing various sports. The use of movements enabled students in these classes to learn about heart rate monitoring and made them more aware of how various types of movement affected the heart rate (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002).

Art classes were known for incorporating various types of brush strokes and pressures in drawing. These elements of art can be expressed through movement before beginning to create. Stretching, tensing, swaying, and various other types of bodily movements could be correlated to a specific type of stroke or line (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002).

Music and dance are sisters in art (Gilbert, 1995). Where one is present, so is the other. In music classes specifically, there seemed to be a correlation between the content learned and the incorporation of movement based activities. In music curricula nationwide, there was always an element of each planned lesson that allowed for some sort of kinesthetic aspect (McCarthy, 1996). For elementary schools, folk music was a large part of the curriculum. Often,
there was a dance that was typical of the particular region or culture that the song refers to. In order to create a muscle memory for the students, adding in the dance while singing the folk songs bridged that gap (McCarthy, 1996).

Other classrooms across the country utilized a system of physical movement in the music classroom founded on Dalcroze Eurhythmics Principles (Gilbert, 1996). These principles relied on the idea that concepts of rhythm, structure, and musical expression could be learned using movement. Dalcroze allowed students to internalize the music they heard in order to create a connection between the dance and music (Gilbert, 1996). That type of movement in the classroom not only increased muscle memory and retention, but also aided in self-expression and physical freedom (Gilbert, 1996). For example, in Gilbert’s (1996) study, students were to examine Haydn’s Third Movement of Symphony No. 94 through movement. Students were able to listen to the pieces repeatedly until they could create a movement that was indicative of the music they were hearing. The activity resulted in students finding that they could move their body on different ‘levels’ to indicate the upward and downward motion of the piece (Gilbert, 1996). Because of the repetition and student’s self-chosen movement to the piece, they were able to re-create the movements and sing the melody of the third movement with ease over a longer period of time.

Additional Skills

Movement in the general and music classrooms also provided other additional skills that would not previously be fostered in a traditional classroom setting. These skills included self-
expression, body awareness & image, responsibility for learning, developing social skills, problem solving, and overcoming disabilities. In an article by MacDonald (1991), the author argued that for students in Kindergarten through third grade, movement activities as an extension aided in creativity, problem solving and expression of thoughts and feelings (MacDonald, 1991). For those students, movement activities built on previous experiences. The combination of the movement activity and prior experience helped the student create a stronger memory, which then created a stronger relationship between the body and the mind (Rowen, 1969). Deprivation of opportunities to move and create caused a delay in language and reasoning ability (Rowen, 1969; Carlson, 1980). A similar article by Jacobson, Jones, Taylor, & Munter (1970), found that not only was movement a form of expression in younger children, but it was also a vital part of sensory motor development (et al., 1970). Taylor’s (1973) article on teaching musical concepts through body movement agreed with the findings of Jacobson, Jones, Taylor, & Munter (1970), by further stating that movement not only developed sensory motor skills, but created control and coordinated movements of the body, which then led to a student’s body awareness (Taylor, 1973). In older students, moving to music was found to be linked to improved social skill and self-expression. The previously mentioned article by Rowen (1969) also found that there was a direct link to sensitivity and responding to situation with more feeling and social skill in students that had been allowed to movement and express themselves (Rowen, 1969; Carlson, 1980). For disabled students, movement exercises were found to be an alternative type of lesson that benefitted the entire class. Movement during the
lesson improved attention span and kept students engaged with both mind and body (MacDonald, 1991; Jacobson, et al., 1970).

**Integrating Movement into Lessons**

Integrating movement and dance into classroom instruction can be a simple and natural option for teachers in both primary and intermediate settings. Since movement has three elements; space, time, and force, any of the three elements can be incorporated into a lesson to get the students up and engaged (Carlson, 1980). For example, in a study by Carlson (1980), primary students were to learn the musical component of form. In this study, students were to spiral, slide, turn, and push their bodies around the room to demonstrate changes in the music they were listening to (Carlson, 1980). The elements of spiraling and sliding took up space, the turn demonstrated time, and the push created force. Though Carlson (1980) used all of these elements in the lesson, choosing any one of these skills to teach form would have added an element of movement to the lesson that any level of student could handle. This type of incorporation of movement could be used instead of having students continually sit, and raise their hands at the form change. Another primary study by Rowen (1969) utilized natural movements of children such as jumping, stomping, marching, and walking. When listening to music to describe a mood, each song depicted a different mood in the music which students would have to associate with a type of movement (Rowen, 1969). The students were then able to make their own creative decisions about why they chose the movement that they used based on the song selection. This type of movement could easily be incorporated into a lesson.
on mood instead of perhaps relating the mood to color, which would be a more sedentary activity. In another study by Carlson (1980), intermediate students were asked to listen to a musical selection, “Baba Yaga” for expression. After listening, students were to utilize all the three elements of movement, to portray the feeling of the music as it changed (Carlson, 1980). Students were allowed to be as creative as possible and then perform their interpretation. This allowed students to not only express the music, but themselves as well in an environment that would be free of judgment, and harsh penalty of grading. This movement activity could be incorporated into any lesson on expression instead of having students simply describe in writing what they hear.

**Application for Teachers**

Personally, all of the lessons I teach in my classroom have at least one, if not two movement components. As a movement and music teacher, I try to ‘stack’ my lessons so that there is seated instruction, a teacher-lead movement activity, discussing the activity, then student-centered movement time, before bringing the class back together to re-group before they leave my room. Since I teach students ageing from Kindergarten through 5th grade, I find that regardless of the grade, this technique works the best. The students know that they will never have to sit for more than ten minutes to receive the first part of their instruction and therefore are more attentive for that instruction.

When the class gets up to for the movement activity, they automatically space themselves around the room, face me, and get quiet. This way, I know they are ready for
instruction and are anxious to move. This teacher-lead movement activity is a time when students can figure out the movements and concepts we’re working on without any repercussions. Everyone looks different when they’re moving, and the students are so consumed in figuring out how to properly execute the movement, that there is no concern for other students and what others are doing. For example, in a 2nd grade unit on meter and patterns, as a class, we first discussed the type of dance that would fit into a pattern of three-the waltz. We briefly talked about where the waltz originated, by whom, and why. The students then stood, found a space in the room and waited for the music to begin. Using Tchaikovsky’s Waltz of Flowers, the students first swayed to the pulse of the music to find the steady beat. Once identified, we listened and swayed to the song once again to see how many beats were in between each pulse, which the students identified as three. We listened, swayed, and counted for a third time, all while thinking of a shape that would fit into our pattern of three; the triangle. We then brainstormed how we could move in a triangular pattern with our feet to meet the needs of the music, which we determined through trial and error as an upside-down triangle, starting and ending at the point. Together, we listened to the music and moved in a triangular pattern to the pulse of the music.

When we discussed the activity while seated, we listed how moving helped us understand the pattern and how this pattern of three would look as a time signature. The students were then dismissed to a space in the room to practice the triangle pattern and add their own creative step to the triangle. I was then able to move around the classroom to see the progress and expression of each student. In this activity alone, I knew that all students were
fully engaged in the lesson. While their patterns may look slightly different, I was able to assess their knowledge in a judgment free activity, and learn more about them as a person, while continuing to teach my curriculum.

While there is still little research in the area of movement in the music classroom, it is evident that the advantages of utilizing movement in music lessons outweigh the disadvantages. Even the smallest of movement based activities in the classroom benefit all students and create a more engaging and student centered lesson. Hopefully with more music teachers incorporating movement and dancing into their lessons, there will be more research and evidence in the future to support the need to include movement in the music classroom.
Bibliography


Methodology

I created a curriculum that includes using dance to teach musical concepts because the literature makes it clear that students learn best through movement. Much of the framework for the general music curriculum leaves much room for interpretation for teachers. Often, teachers create lessons that they will continue to use year after year, regardless of changes in students, available resources, current culture, or music.

To ensure that teachers how may be intimidated or unsure of how to integrate such a wide range of movement and dance forms into the music classroom, I have created 4 basic outlines of lessons that can be changed, and or adapted to meet their current and future needs. The entire unit has the possibility to span an entire quarter, or be used separately based on other musical skills and genres that may be addressed in the curriculum. Each lesson, other than the introduction and overview, covers at least 2 weeks, with an option for an additional week of student showcase or practice.

The introductory lesson is constructed to build interest in the class. Asking the overarching question of ‘What do we know about dance?’ students can brainstorm what they already know, or what they think they may know about dancing. Collaborating on this general idea will lead to class discussions that will elaborate on what is coming in the following classes. Building the idea of dancing in class may also take some convincing in the older grades. This open discussion may also calm some fears of dancing in front of each other and can be a great teachable moment for future performances.
Upon completing the introductory lesson, ballet is the first form of dance that is introduced to the class. It is important to introduce ballet before the other forms because ballet is the core of all other dances. The seven basic moves that are outlined in the lesson, and seen in the appendix, are the basis for all the other dances moves that will be learned throughout the unit. Creating a strong basis of ballet will aid the students learning, and teaching for the remainder of the unit. These basic moves can be compared to the basic rhythms that students learn in music. Knowing them allows further literacy and freedom in learning new music in class.

Once ballet is mastered, jazz is easily relatable. As the second lesson in the unit, jazz utilizes many of the previously mentioned moves but in a more emotional and exaggerated fashion. This allows students a break from the rigidity of ballet and keeps their interest, while reinforcing various techniques. The variation on ballet is also tied into the idea of variation in music. Adding the parallel can easily be showcased to students through musical examples or having students create their own movement examples.

The tap dancing unit brings back the exact moves that were learned in ballet, as well as a few new steps that are only used in tap dancing. The new idea here is that students will learn a brief history of the tap shoe, and how it has metal on the bottom creating the unique sound that most students have become accustomed to hearing. A musical parallel in tap dancing is the idea of instrument or vocal variety. Each instrument has a different timbre, pitch, and volume and contribute equally to the overall quality of the ensemble. Another parallel can be keeping a
steady beat together. Tap shoes sound wonderful when used at the same time, but create noise when out of sync. The same can be said about ensemble playing, and watching the conductor. Depending on the grade that is being taught, the teacher can use their discretion on which parallel will be best suited.

Hip-Hop allows for more freedom once again. Using the core moves, students can use their prior knowledge of what this kind of dancing entails, and move as their emotions and music allow. Since this is the least restrictive type of dancing, a musical parallel that can be drawn is improvisation. Students can take the moves that they know and change the order and speed of the dances moves, to create their own unique work.

As a final project, students can choose 2-3 partners, and a randomly selected form of dance and create their own dance project. The dance must embody the ideals that were learned during that unit and showcase how their dance relates to a particular musical concept that was parallel during the lessons.
Core Forms of Dance: Introduction

**Objective:** SWBAT be introduced to the four core forms of dance, ballet, jazz, tap, and hip hop, in order to prepare them for an in-depth study of each dance.

**National Standard:** MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. 
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

**Lesson**

1. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)
2. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘What do we know about dancing?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)
3. Have 4 large Post-Its on the board. Label them with: Ballet, Jazz, Tap, and Hip-Hop. Divide the class into 4 groups. Using the ‘What We Know about Dancing’ already listed on the board, have a group list what they know about each type of dance. Set a timer for 3 minutes. Have the groups rotate through each chart and write their prior knowledge on the Post-It. (15 minutes)
4. Have students reconvene and discuss each chart. Ask questions Why they wrote down what they did, Why they associate that dance with ideas listed, etc,. (15 minutes)
5. Take a poll of the students to see which type of dance they believe was created first. Leave that answer on the board for the next class.
6. Clean up and line up!

**Recapitulation & Evaluation**

The poll at the end of class will reconfirm what students are thinking in regards to dance and begin to have them thinking about the upcoming class.
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 1: Ballet

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Ballet, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘Why do we dance using Ballet?’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 1

1. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)

2. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘Why do we dance using Ballet?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)

3. Show the 3 minute video on the History of Ballet (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMH5UKXB4EA) While watching the video, pause to discuss the key points in history (when ballet came about, where, by whom, etc.,) Take this time to also remind students that dance is a sport, and other sport rely on dance; i.e. basketball, football, and soccer. (10 minutes)

4. Introduce the particular Ballet moves that will be practiced in the class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), pique, arabesque, and glissade padasha. (See Appendix A) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)

5. Take ALL of the dance moves and combine them in a song so the student s can understand the continuity. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. (3 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Based on the video, history, and dance moves, did we answer the question of why we dance ballet? Thumbs up or down. What was the correct answer? Write the correct answer on a large notepad to hang in the room for reference. 2-3 minutes)
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 1: Ballet

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Ballet, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘How is ballet like using simple rhythms’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. 
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 2

6. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)

7. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘How does ballet relate to music and rhythms?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)

8. Review the Ballet moves that were practiced in the last class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), pique, arabesque, and glissade padasha. (See Appendix A) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)

9. Take each dance move and put simple rhythms that correlate with each move. Compare these moves to how ballet relates to music, rhythms, and the question that was posed earlier. (10 minutes)

10. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. (3 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Exit Ticket: Describe how a pointe is like a quarter note, or how a toe circle is like a half note.
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 2: Jazz

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Jazz, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘Why do we dance using Jazz?’

National Standard: **MU:Cn10.0.2a** Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. **MU:Pr4.3.2a** Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 1

1. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)
2. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘Why do we dance using Jazz?’ (List answers on the board—keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)
3. Show the 3 minute video on the History of Jazz (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pC4xX3E2JK0) While watching the video, pause to discuss the key points in history (when jazz came about, where, by whom, etc.,) Take this time to also remind students that jazz is BASED ON ballet, and to note the similarities and differences between these two types of dance. (10 minutes)
4. Introduce the particular Jazz moves that will be practiced in the class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), arabesque, and grapevine. (See Appendices A &B) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)
5. Take ALL of the dance moves and combine them in a song so the students can understand the continuity. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. (3 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Based on the video, history, and dance moves, did we answer the question of why we dance jazz? Thumbs up or down. What was the correct answer? Write the correct answer on a large notepad to hang in the room for reference. 2-3 minutes)
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 2: Jazz

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Jazz, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the questions, ‘How is jazz similar to ballet?’ and ‘What is variation?’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 2

6. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)

7. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘What is a variation?’ and ‘How is Jazz a variation of ballet?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)

8. Review the Jazz moves that were practiced in the previous class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), arabesque, and grapevine. (See Appendices A&B) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)

9. Take each dance move and change the music to vary each of the previous dance moves. In between each song, have students work together to discuss how or/if changed their moves based on the song. Was the move varied? Did they add anything to the dance move? (10 minutes)

10. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. Review the initial question based on variation. (3 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Use the group activity with student discussion to take time and talk to students about their variation to gauge their understanding.
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 3: Tap

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Tap, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘Why do we dance using Tap?’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. 
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 1

1. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)
2. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘Why do we dance using Tap?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)
3. Show the 3 minute video on the History of Tap (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tz3az94XYI) While watching the video, pause to discuss the key points in history (when ballet came about, where, by whom, etc.,) Take this time to also link tap dancing to ballet and jazz. How are they similar? How are they different?. (10 minutes)
4. Introduce the particular Tap moves that will be practiced in the class; pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), shuffle step, shuffle hop, and shuffle ball change. (See Appendices A, B, & C) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)
5. Take ALL of the dance moves and combine them in a song so the students can understand the continuity. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. (3 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Based on the video, history, and dance moves, did we answer the question of why we dance tap? Thumbs up or down. What was the correct answer? Write the correct answer on a large notepad to hang in the room for reference. 2-3 minutes)
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 3: Tap

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Tap, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘How is tap dancing similar to ballet? ‘How do you think this is similar or different to using different instruments to play the same rhythm,?’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 2

6. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)

7. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the questions, ‘How is tap similar to ballet? ‘Why do we dance using Tap?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)

8. Review the tap moves that will be practiced in the class particular Tap moves that will be practiced in the class; pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), shuffle step, shuffle hop, and shuffle ball change. (See Appendices A, B, & C) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)

9. Have students pause, and compare which tap moves were similar and which were different. Take each dance move and put simple rhythms that correlate with each move. Compare these rhythms and answer the question that was posed earlier. (10 minutes)

10. How does this compare to music? Can we play the same rhythm or passage with different instruments? Use various instruments-shakers, triangle, drums, etc to demonstrate. (10 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Exit Ticket: What is the point/benefit of using different instruments to play the same rhythms? (5 minutes)
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 4: Hip Hop

**Objective:** SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Hip-Hop, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the question, ‘Why do we dance using Hip-Hop?’

**National Standard:** MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.  
MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

**Lesson 1**

1. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)
2. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the question, ‘Why do we dance using Hip-Hop?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)
3. Show the 3 minute video on the History of Hip-Hip ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bse-Ac0Xrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bse-Ac0Xrs)) While watching the video, pause to discuss the key points in history (when ballet came about, where, by whom, etc.,) Take this time to also link hip-hop to jazz. Hip-hop is BASED ON jazz, with less structure and more self-expression. (10 minutes)
4. Introduce the particular Ballet moves and hip-hop variations that will be practiced in the class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), pique, arabesque, and any body moves that incorporate a step and clap. (See Appendices A&B). Variations would include use of arm circles, bouncing, changing the speed of the moves, or having students use their imagination to add to each step. Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (25 minutes)
5. Take ALL of the dance moves and combine them in a song so the students can understand the continuity. Get a drink of water (if needed) then sit back down together on the rug. (3 minutes)

**Recapitulation & Evaluation**

Based on the video, history, and dance moves, did we answer the question of why we dance hip-hop? Thumbs up or down. What was the correct answer? Write the correct answer on a large notepad to hang in the room for reference. 2-3 minutes)
Core Forms of Dance Lesson 4: Hip Hop

Objective: SWBAT learn about a type of core dance, Hip-Hop, in order to gain a cultural understanding and answer the questions, ‘What are some similarities and differences between ballet and hip-hop?’ and ‘How does hip-hop dancing show the musical concept of improvisation?’

National Standard: MU:Cn10.0.2a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. MU:Pr4.3.2a Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities.

Lesson 2

6. Welcome the students! Have a seat on the rug for a brief introduction. Read the objective aloud and question the students as to what they think we’re doing today. (5 minutes)

7. Entertain questions and ideas, and then pose the questions, ‘Is Hip-Hop similar or different than the other types of dance we have learned?’ and ‘What is improvisation?’ (List answers on the board-keep these ideas for later in the class) (5 minutes)

8. Review Ballet/Hip-Hop moves that will be practiced in the class; first & second position, pointe, rendejambe (toe circle), pique, arabesque, and glissade padasha with variations as previously mentioned. (See Appendices A&B) Write them on the board as a visual. Have the students stand up and find a tape spot (or area where they can safely perform these moves) in the room. Practice each of these moves first for overall technique (with a roughly 70% success rate), and then add music to that particular move. Check off the moves on the board as you proceed, repeating the technique then music pattern. (15 minutes)

9. Select a hip-hop inspired song by artists such as Michael Jackson, Bruno Mars, Justin Timberlake, or Chris Brown and have students use the dance moves they have learned and dance however the music makes them move. When the song is over, ask student why they danced the way they did, and if comfortable, show the class. Use this activity to introduce the musical concept of improvisation. (10 minutes)

Recapitulation & Evaluation

Before leaving, poll students to see how they think this idea of improvisation can be used in other musical ways. This way, another lesson can follow, or the teacher can also use a written exit ticket for the end of the lesson. (10 minutes)
Overview

Unit 3: Core Forms of Dance

Suitable for grades 1-3 (with brief modifications needed for 1st in the area of ability)

Works Best: Beginning of the 3rd quarter (or halfway through the year)

Preceded by: The Nutcracker: Unit 2. The styles of dance in the Ballet and A Show-and-Tell with various dance costumes. Students will examine both Acts of The Nutcracker Ballet in order to understand the story, as well as why the various music in the ballet is suitable for each dance performed. The culmination of the Unit will include a Show-and-Tell with dance shoes, costumes, and a demonstration of dance moves in each type of shoe.

Follow Up: Dancing Through the Decades: Unit 4 (An 8 lesson unit) Based on the understanding that each core form of dance is the basis for the various dances in the particular unit of study. Students will make connections to history as well as perform various popular dances from that decade that ultimately leads up to the dances that we perform today.

Evaluate: In order to evaluate student knowledge at the end of the Unit, students may perform various dances moved learned in the unit (the teacher may be creative and form a game using the techniques) Or, have the students complete the attached vocabulary worksheet.
Conclusion

Movement and music go hand in hand. Feet tapping and hand clapping are the telltale signs of musical enjoyment and our body’s way of showing the effects that it has on us all. If adults can enjoy movement through music, a child’s response to the same music would be tenfold. It is apparent in lessons that I developed that pairing musical concepts and dancing work extremely well and are not difficult to parallel.

Comparing improvisation to hip-hop, variation to jazz, steady beat and foundations to ballet, and orchestration to tap are the most common parallels, but not the only ones that can be shown. Incorporating movement will only add to the extended sequence and variety of lessons. With a little creativity, or even imagination on the part of the students, musical concepts can be expressed in ways that may not have seemed possible. Sometimes, music teachers forget how much students need to move to get their brains energized and hone in on that energy in a musical way. Getting up and out of the musical comfort zone may be just the thing that both the students and teachers need to succeed in our ever changing educational society.
Appendices

Appendix A: Ballet

Figure A1: First Position
Feet together in a ‘V’ shape, Arms rounded in a circle

Figure A2: Second Position
Feet shoulder width apart, arms wide with rounded hands
Figure A3: Tendu:
Front, Side, Back
Figure A4: Reindejambe (Toe Circle)

Pointe toe front, move foot away in a circular pattern away from the point of origin, then back
Figure A5: Arabesque

Point toe to the side, extend opposite arm up on a diagonal

Figure A6: Pique

One arm extended, the other in a ‘C’ shape above the head. Feet take out, opposite toe comes up to touch knee, then back together
Appendix B: Jazz

Figure B1: Grapevine

Moving the feet out to the side, then back behind, out to the side, and together
Figure B2: Glissade Padasha

Step out and slide opposite foot, lift one knee up, then the other, land in first position
Appendix C: Tap

Figure C1: Shuffle Step
Bring foot back, brush front, brush back, step together
Figure C2: Shuffle, Hop Step

Bring foot back, brush front, brush back, hop in place, step together
Figure C3: Shuffle Ball-Change Step

Bring foot back, brush back, brush front, step behind, lift front foot, place together