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This project examines the implementation of teaching strategies focused on improving respect, communication, and a sense of belonging within a level one high school dance class, and whether these strategies will increase positive social relationships among the students and with the teacher. The following questions will be addressed in the pursuit of this central purpose: Do activities that promote increased positive social relationships (student-student and teacher-student) in a high school level one dance class have an improved effect on the classroom learning environment? How does the implementation and sequencing of activities, as well as timing, have an effect on the success of building relationships within the classroom? There were sixty-eight participants in this study; sixty-six were female and two were male. This study took place between two different Dance I classes. One class was the test group and the other was a control group. Students ranged from ninth grade to twelfth grade in a public high school. The data was derived from pre and post-tests, as well as four additional teacher assessments during the implementation of activities. The findings of this study revealed that when positive social relationship strategies are purposefully built into classroom activities, the result is increased respect, communication, a sense of belonging, and student success for the participants in the classroom. Data also shows that students who do not participate in the study, lack the skills of respect, communication, and a sense of belonging, within the dance classroom.

Developing Positive Social Relationships Among Level I High School Dance Students

by

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Approved by

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Mila Parrish

To my students, past and present: You all inspire me each and every day. You challenge me, you question me, and you push me beyond my comfort zone. Your hard work and passion for dancing encourage me to want more for myself so I can give more to you. Keep that fire alive and continue to challenge all that come in your path.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis written by Jennifer A. Muisenga Florey has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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Date of Acceptance

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It is the job of the teacher to create and maintain a classroom environment where students feel safe to learn and be themselves. This project examines the implementation of teaching strategies focused on improving respect, communication, and a sense of belonging within a level one high school dance class, and whether these strategies will increase positive social relationships among the students and with the teacher. This thesis involves a variety of activities focused on developing respect, communication, and a sense of belonging, as well as reflective surveys for the students to complete.

For my thesis project, I chose to focus on the development of positive social relationships within the dance classroom, specifically in the high school Dance I classroom. Dance I classes are typically made up of students who are brand new to dance or have had very little dance experience. Those who do have experience usually took dance classes for a few years when they were very young and have not had any recent classes. In Dance I, students are not only unfamiliar with a dance classroom daily routine, but they are also unfamiliar and usually uncomfortable with the typical activities presented. Technical dancing is foreign to their bodies and because they feel strange, they become embarrassed.

As I progressed through my years of teaching, I began to notice how the higher-level dance classes had a much different classroom environment than the Dance I classes.

Students in the higher-level classes are familiar with the routine, with moving their bodies, and they are especially comfortable with each other. Since students often progress through the levels together, they grow closer through the years. They speak openly with each other, they understand and respect each other, and they feel as though the dance room is a second home. The higher-level students speak openly and are closer to me, the teacher, just as I am with them. My higher-level students come in voluntarily during their lunch to sit and talk with me, they stay after school to hang out, and I am often the person they come to when they are needing support with something going on outside of school. Because of their openness to me, I am more open about my personal life with them. The higher-level students often travel with me as well, so they get to know me outside the classroom setting. I began to wonder how I could create this positive social environment earlier in the Dance I class, as opposed to waiting until students moved up in levels through the years.

Developing positive social environments in the Dance I classroom became my focus for this project. Over the course of five months, I observed what was lacking in my Dance I classes and what needed to be done to build a positive social environment. I noticed that some students lacked respect for their peers and their teacher, students rarely communicated with each other or their teacher, and they did not feel comfortable with their classmates. In order to create an environment like what is seen in the higher-level classes, I needed to focus on developing those three areas; respect, communication, and a sense of belonging.

Over the course of the project, I created and implemented several activities that focused on each of the criteria I wanted to develop more within the classroom. Each activity was interactive and got the students working with each other, as well as with the teacher. Throughout the process, students completed pre-surveys which asked specific questions to guide the implementation of activities, as well as assessments, to determine their growth in each area. Informal reflections were also completed that resulted in students reflecting on how they felt in class after doing the activities. At the end, students completed a post-survey allowing me, the teacher, to see if and how they noticed the change in respect, communication, and sense of belonging within their classroom.

### **Population**

The implementation of this project took place in two separate Dance I classes. Each class is located in a public high school in a high poverty community. The town is located twenty miles north of the Mexico border and because of that, there is a high population of Mexican students. Most students live about ten miles south of where the school is located, while some live and commute from Mexico each day. There is also a high population of migrant students due to their parents working in the fields during farming season. Based on family demographics, the public high school is labeled a Title I school and 100% of students receive free breakfast and lunch.

Between the two Dance I classes, there are a total of sixty-eight students. Sixty-six of those students are female and two are male. There are three special education students, one student on a 504 Plan, and four labeled as English Language Learners. The classes are both in the morning, one being first-period and the other being second-period.

Of the two classes, the first-period class was the one receiving the implementation tools described in the methods section of this thesis, while the second-period class resumed instruction as normal.

### **Research Questions:**

This study examines the development of positive social relationships with regard to the following questions:

- Do activities that promote increased positive social relationships (student-student and teacher-student) in a high school level one dance class have an improved effect on the classroom learning environment?
- How does the implementation and sequencing of activities, as well as timing, have an effect on the success of building relationships within the classroom?

### **Project Goals**

According to the research I completed, I believed that the first step in the implementation of specific activities was to be sure that students knew each other's names. Each student should be confident in calling someone by name and beginning conversation. I think that students will become more open to talking to various peers within the class, and when placed with a partner or group, have the same open communication as they would with their closer friends. Subsequently, students should also be more open to starting and having a conversation with their teacher and know that their teacher values their opinions and ideas.

Through the implementation of activities promoting respect, students will become more aware of how they interact with each other. There will be more of a focus on their

word choice, the tone of their voice, and even their body language. Students will learn to recognize disrespect and know how to change what they are doing to show respect to others. From the combination of open communication and respect, students will have a greater understanding of each other and will be open to listening to all ideas and opinions. Whether students agree or not, they will be able to discuss in a positive and respectful way with each other and be okay with having different opinions. Students should feel a sense of belonging when they walk into the dance class and know their teacher and peers support them in all that they do. Students should find value in each other and know that they have a community to go to whenever they are having problems, both in and out of the dance classroom.

Overall, I believe that through my thesis project, my class will grow closer to each other and will look at dance class as a positive environment. They will see the dance class as a safe place where they are able to open up freely without judgment. Lastly, beyond this thesis, it is my hope that students take the positive social relationships they built within the dance classroom to other outside areas of their life, or they at least take the lessons that they have learned to build positive social relationships in all aspects of their lives.

### **Clarification of Terms**

- **Caring Encounter:** a meeting between at least two individuals engaging and responding to both their internal and external worlds

(Siemietkowski & Gose, 2018, p. 2).

- **Celebrating Student Success:** the setting of goals and milestones as a class, and individually, as well as the planning of celebrations when reaching goals and milestones (Jensen, 2016, p. 170).
- **Communication:** the process of meaningful interaction among human beings (Communication: Meaning, Purpose, Importance and Principles, 2015).
- **Positive Environment:** one in which students feel a sense of belonging, trust others and feel encouraged to tackle challenges, take risks, and ask questions (Young, 2014, p. 1).
- **Positive Psychology:** the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. Positive psychology is based on the notion that we are motivated to develop into our best selves and reach our maximum potential (Kennette & Myatt, 2018, p. 63).
- **Positive Social Interactions:** Interactions that take place between peers that are positive in nature and successful for both children involved. Provide instruction, correction, modeling and support for students, forming the basis of a teacher-student relationship (Jensen, 2016, p. 28).
- **Positive Social Relationships:** social relations composed of an immense number of social, physical, and verbal interactions that create a climate for the exchange of feelings and ideas (Social Relations, n.d., paragraph 1).
- **Relationships:** positive connections between students, adults, and peers in the school setting that foster positive social interaction and establish a nurturing environment of trust and support (Relationships, n.d. paragraph 1).

- **Student-Student:** interacting respectfully and collaboratively with each other and supporting one another through caring relationships (Relationships and Belonging, n.d.).
- **Student-Teacher:** communicating positive expectations, correcting students in a constructive way, developing positive classroom pride, demonstrating care, and preventing and reducing teacher's own frustration and stress (Relationships and Belonging, n.d.).
- **Respect:** feeling of being safe, supported, engaged, and challenged. Treating others properly, including teachers and students (Cohen, Cardillo & Pickeral, 2018, Respectful schools are).
- **Sense of Belonging:** using strengths to develop skills to pursue a more meaningful life and more enjoyable experience (Kennette & Myatt, 2018, p. 64).

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

It is assumed that the students in this sample provided honest responses to questions regarding respect, communication, and a feeling of belonging in relation to their peers and teacher within the dance classroom. The responses to these questions were used for developing and sequencing activities throughout the project and played no part in their grade for class; thus, students should not have been motivated to provide inaccurate answers. It is also assumed that students put forth their best effort in all activities and kept an open mind, even during activities they were unfamiliar performing.

The results of this study are influenced and limited by one major factor; that is, the implementation of the project occurred during the middle of the school year and



therefore, students had some familiarity with each other, the school, and the dance classroom. This is very different from starting the project at the beginning of the year; by this time, students have spent five months together. This could have an effect on the results of the study, assuming students have formed friendships within the classroom already. These previously formed relationships could limit the extent to which students are open to developing new relationships with other peers in their class. On the other hand, it would not have been possible for me to anticipate the dire need for this project at the beginning of the academic school year. Though I had faced similar challenges in previous years, I could not assume that this year would be the same. By starting mid-year, I had witnessed first-hand the difficulties that students were having in social relationships and could adapt my teaching to fit the needs of the students. I was also able to determine which class was in higher need of building positive social relationships.

### **Problems**

For this project, I chose to focus on areas of need within my Dance I classes. Over the course of a couple years, I began noticing a lack of connection between my Dance I students, as well as between the students and myself. Each year brought new and different challenges, but the underlying areas of weakness were respect, communication, and a sense of belonging. In the book, *What We Know About Belonging from Scientific Research*, the author shares that when a student does not feel safe or comfortable in their classroom environment, learning will not occur (Romero, 2015, p. 2). It was my goal as a teacher to brainstorm how I could create a space where students felt safe being themselves and were successful at learning.

When choosing which class period to implement the activities, I analyzed which set of students struggled the most with the criteria I was focusing on. Each class period had their strengths and weaknesses, but first period Dance I lacked most in the areas of communication and a sense of belonging. Students were not motivated to speak with each other or get to know one another. Because they rarely spoke, respect was not so much an issue, but students did not feel comfortable coming into class. I felt as though first period would benefit most from the implementation of activities discussed in this thesis.

### **Significance of the Study**

I began to observe the areas in which both the students and I lacked in the positive social relationship. I observed students not talking to peers outside their friend groups, students not knowing their peer's names (even after 8 months of being in the same class), students not feeling comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas with peers and the teacher, lack of positive language when speaking with each other, and a lack of support among students within the class. It was as if instead of having 34 students working as one, I had 34 students working as 34 individual beings. This made group work, partner work, and class collaboration very difficult.

As I began reading many different books and articles on how to build positive social relationships among teens and in classrooms, I began to pull out criteria that matched what I was looking to build within my classroom. Sources shared that when students feel as though they belong and have meaning amongst their peers, they are more comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas. In *Unlocking student talent: The new science of developing expertise*, Fogarty, Kerns and Pete (2018) state that when the

teacher helps students discover who and what motivates them, students begin to have more meaning behind their actions and go about those actions with other's feelings in mind (Fogarty, Kerns & Pete, p. 7). One big thing that many researchers shared was the importance of communication. Without various forms of communication and knowing how to communicate, students cannot and will not understand the feelings of others. I noticed that all of these criteria fell into what I was lacking in my Dance I classroom.

I came to the decision that I would focus on building positive social relationships in my classroom through activities that focused on open communication, respect, and a sense of belonging, among both peers and the teacher. As I researched, I began to write down activities I already do in the classroom, as well as new ones that I felt would focus on these different areas for building relationships. My plan was to implement these activities into regular lessons daily, to give students more opportunities to build communication and respect amongst their peers and teacher, and to feel as though they belong and are wanted in class each and every day.

### **Overview of Methodology**

From the research I conducted, many methods and strategies were available to use for building positive social environments within the classroom; however, these were mostly geared toward the regular classroom. Using what I know about dance and many of the activities I have collected over the years, I applied the methods from the traditional classroom into my activities, and adapted them to the dance classroom. As a result, I created a toolbox of activities that focus on the areas of respect, communication, and a sense of belonging. These activities were implemented over a six-week time period

within the context of the regular dance technique curriculum. New activities relating to traditional strategies and methods were also developed that align specifically to the nature of the dance classroom. These newly developed activities were researched, applied, and measured so that they would work specifically in the dance classroom.

I began my project by determining the sequence in which to implement the activities and how that would help determine the success of the project. Activities were divided based on the criteria they covered, and from there I sectioned the criteria into approximately two-week time periods. At the beginning of the two-weeks, students would take a pre-survey asking them questions about the specific topic that was to be covered. Based on the results of the pre-survey, I would adapt activities to the student's needs, as well as adjust sequencing if necessary. Approximately 3-5 activities were introduced each week, some taking just a few minutes while others spanned a couple days. At the end of the two weeks, I would assess students individually on their growth in respect, communication, and a sense of belonging, based off a rubric I created. Throughout the implementation process, students completed weekly two monthly journals that were part of the regular curriculum but acted as an informal assessment to student growth. At the end of the six-week implementation period, students completed a post-survey on each of the criteria to determine student growth in each area.

## **Conclusion**

As teachers, it is our job to create a classroom environment that students feel safe in and look forward to attending each day. This should be a place where students can be themselves, seek comfort in their peers and teacher, and trust that they will be respected.

From the observation of student's needs, research of various methodologies, and implementation of various activities that focus on developing respect, communication, and a sense of belonging in the Dance I classroom, students will begin to feel more safe and excited walking into the dance classroom. Students will feel more secure with their peers and teacher, and will hopefully consider their dance class a family. Though timing in the year and previously developed relationships may limit the extent of this study, it is hoped that students become more willing to expand their relationships with other peers within the class.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Based on the research of many scholars in the fields of education, dance, and psychology, there are numerous factors that apply in the building of positive social relationships in the classroom. Of the social factors researched for the dance classroom, respect, communication, and a sense of belonging seem the most important for establishing positive relationships. In the review of the literature presented below, each scholar suggests innovative strategies as a means for focusing on the specific needs of the students, as well as the teacher. It is from these scholarly suggestions that a series of socializing activities were developed for this thesis. The purpose was to focus on building positive social relationships for my unique population of dance students. Each of the headings below indicates a specific area of focused investigation, as well as addressing the needs of my population of students.

#### **Communication**

In order to build trust with another person, you must be able to comfortably communicate with them. When positive communication is established, individuals will begin to confide in each other and trust sharing personal things about their lives. “Just as relationship with self is inherently linked to relationship with others, so too is trust in self rooted in trust in others”, (Raider-Roth & Gilligan, 2005, p. 29). Raider-Roth and Gilligan explained that trust must happen first before relationships can be built among

teachers and students. They share their experience with several students by asking them how they viewed trust and relationships within their classes and with their teachers. When students do not trust one another or the teacher, communication can suffer, but the two go together. Teachers cannot discover what their students' level of trust is without communication. Activities built around trust and communication help build positive relationships in the classroom while increasing skills in both areas. Simple activities like "Blind Lead" or "Land Mines", discussed more in depth later in this thesis, encourage students to communicate with their partner while also seeking trust in one another. Once trust is built, communication increases and relationships begin to be formed. If teachers want to build positive relationships within their classroom, trust and communication need to be the starting point.

Once trust has been formed and open communication has been developed, the teacher can implement new ways for students to build connections with each other, later forming positive social relationships within the class. Donna Dragon (2015), Dr. Mila Parrish, Amy Bramlett Turner, and this author, Jennifer Florey (2018) all shared that when goals and expectations are communicated openly within a classroom between students and teacher, there is more success in the building of positive social relationships. Positive social relationships are defined as, "social relations composed of an immense number of social, physical, and verbal interactions that create a climate for the exchange of feelings and ideas" (Social Relations, n.d., paragraph 1). One strategy to support students' communication and social interaction is by asking students what their goals and expectations are for the class. By doing this the teacher is immediately recognizing what

students want to learn and can, therefore, guide their planning to fit the student's wants and needs. As Dragon discussed in her article, when we incorporate our students into the planning process, students feel more supported and motivated to achieve. When students are not given this opportunity to communicate their goals and expectations, teachers will never know what their students want.

Communicating goals and expectations also allows students to form connections with their peers within the classroom (Parrish, Florey & Bramlett Turner, 2018). Students communicate out loud the goal they are working toward and may discover that other students have that same goal. Together they find an area of similarity and can support one another on their journey to achieving their goal. Communicating expectations also sets up a class for success. By sharing out loud what they expect of themselves, their peers, and their teacher on a daily basis, students begin to form common areas. The teacher also recognizes what type of environment the students need in order to succeed. These expectations are a good starting block, as well as a way to "check in" throughout the year. Subsequently, students begin to hold themselves accountable while also communicating with their peers when expectations are not being met.

In, "A Collaboration in Care: Re-visioning teacher-student dialogue in dance education", the authors discussed the components of a caring relationship, which are reflection, dialogue, and application (Gose & Siemietkowski, 2018, p. 27). First, students and teachers must reflect on their experiences, both positive and negative. These experiences shape who you are as a person and can affect how you go about certain actions. Not only do teachers need to provide opportunities for students to reflect, but



teachers must also reflect on their experiences and how that could be affecting their teaching. Gose and Siemietkowski suggested that teachers should provide opportunities for students to express their experiences in structured writing activities. Activities like, “I am...”, and “I come from...” give students a starting point for writing and reflection. Students are able to reflect on their past experiences, share as much as they feel comfortable with their peers, and apply those experiences to the creation of movement. Teachers involve students in discussions with their peers, which gives them an outlet to share personal stories. This (in turn) builds trust and students become more comfortable communicating to their peers and teachers.

Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule (2006), shared little ways in which the teacher can build positive relationships with their students through small interactions. Relationships between students and teachers are extremely important in order to have a successful classroom. Relationships are defined as, “positive connections between students, adults, and peers in the school setting that foster positive social interaction and establish a nurturing environment of trust and support” (Relationships, n.d., paragraph 1). Teachers need to know the needs of their students and understand why their students may behave the way that they do. One simple strategy a teacher can do is interact with each student. Though this is hard when class sizes are upwards of forty students and class is only forty-five minutes long, nevertheless, teachers can find small moments, such as when passing in the hall. Small interactions will build trust between teacher and student, which in turn builds the positive social relationship between teacher and student. The undivided attention

teachers give a student could be the one thing that could stand out to them, and students will cherish that forever.

At the National Dance Education Organization National Conference in San Diego, California in October of 2018, Grace Siemtietkowski and Rebecca Gose (2018) presented, “Strategies for Caring Teacher-Student Communication”. In their presentation, they shared ways teachers might conduct a discussion with students to help them feel heard and comfortable in the classroom. One specific strategy presented was allowing students to choose their form of communication in the discussion. Not all students enjoy speaking out loud and not all enjoy writing on paper. By allowing options for discussion, students can choose which they feel most comfortable doing; in turn, this can lead to more participation and in-depth discussion. Not only will teachers be more pleased with the outcome of discussions, but students who may not usually participate in class will begin to chime in because they are able to communicate in a way that feels comfortable to them.

### **Sense of Belonging**

Romero (2015) speaks about how students feel more connected, supported, and respected in school when they have a sense of belonging (Romero, p.1). She shared that when students are uncertain as to whether they belong in a certain environment, their thinking is more focused on what is going on around them rather than learning. In her article, “What We Know About Belonging from Scientific Research”, Romero (2015) provides instructional strategies that teachers can implement into their lessons that will help students find belonging and acceptance among peers. One strategy derived from her

ideas was “Accountability Groups”. When students have a close group of friends whom they can go to for support, it builds their sense of belonging in the class. They know there are peers in the room that will be there for them and help them in their struggles. Creating small groups within the classroom and providing time for those groups to meet with one another builds relationships that could continue outside of the dance classroom. Though the goal is for students to be valued by all their peers within a class, starting small will support the building of relationships among more peers.

When we help students discover their strengths, we begin to support them in finding purpose behind their work. Both teachers and students must be invested in what they are doing in order to put forth their best effort. Examining the definition of positive psychology, “the notion that we are motivated to develop into our best selves and reach our maximum potential”, we see that many students do not know how to see their best self (Kennette & Myatt, 2018, p. 63). It is rare to find a high school student that has been asked what their best self is and what they are going to do to achieve that. Teachers must allow time for students to discover their own strengths, and if students struggle doing so, be there to help them discover their strengths. Many times, when asked, “what are your strengths?” students are unable to come up with a response. Using accountability groups and individual student-teacher conversation can help students find the motivation to continue pushing forward. These interactions build relationships and help the students see that others see the best in them, even when they may not see the best in themselves quite yet.

In addition to supporting students discovering their best selves, teachers must also help students find what motivates them. When students identify things that push them to succeed and focus on those things, they build connections behind their actions. Rather than doing something because they are told to, they begin to connect that as they succeed through small tasks it will build up to something bigger, which in turn makes them and people in their lives proud. Fogarty, Kerns, and Pete (2018) shared strategies to support students' will to work and sense of belonging in *Unlocking student talent: The new science of developing expertise*. From Fogarty's strategies came the creation of the activity "What Motivates You?". Helping students identify things in their lives that were important to them or who they wanted to make proud, created a deliberate practice for their work. Through the creation of posters and being able to express their creativity, students built connections between their actions and their reasons for showing up each day. It could be as simple as good grades, or as big as being the first in their family to graduate and making their parents proud.

In the article, "In the Moment: Honoring the teaching and learning lived experience", Cone (2007) spoke about how we can include our students more in the planning and teaching of classroom lessons and activities (Cone, p. 37). Instead of planning lessons with just what the teacher has in mind, consider what the students want to be learning and incorporate that into the lessons. Allow opportunities for students to be teachers and share their strengths with the class. By doing each of these things, we are including our students in the process and building relationships with our students. One easy strategy for getting students more involved in the planning process is the

incorporation of a “Comment Box”, found in the Appendix B. Students are able to anonymously ask questions or suggest what they would like to see happening in their class. It allows students who may have ideas, but are too nervous to share out loud with the teacher, to input their opinions and ideas. When the teacher answers questions or incorporates ideas, it fulfills student’s needs and students begin to feel more valued in the classroom. They notice that their voices are heard by their teacher and they feel like they matter.

Covey (1989) and Erkert (2018) shared that when we understand where students come from, and the similarities and differences among one another, we understand each other better. This research project takes place in a border town of low socioeconomic status; consequently, the students come from challenging backgrounds. There are many things that go on in their lives outside of the classroom that I may never know about. But these experiences are what make them who they are and affect how they build relationships within the classroom. Covey suggests that if we give students opportunity to share about where they come from or their frustrations outside of school, teachers and peers are better able to understand and support them on a new level (Covey, p. 252).

Implementing activities like “I am...”, and I come from...” allow students to express things about themselves that they might never be asked. Students use writing as a way to release their problems and frustrations, and movement to express themselves. Through discussion, students are able to decide their openness with each other, but also allow others to discover similarities and connections to their own lives. There are many challenges that my students face that their peers also face. Students are often scared to

share about their lives because they do not think anyone can relate or no one will understand, but in reality, there are many others going through similar things. When students discover these connections and realize they have a support group within their class, they feel valued and safe. Students feel as though they belong and know they have a place to express their struggles and seek support.

Dance is often used as a form of expression and communication. Dancers use their bodies to express feelings that they may not be able to express in words. When students are uncomfortable with their peers or struggle to form connections with each other, they are not able to fully express themselves through movement. Students feel insecure about themselves and what they come up with, and they often are not willing to take movement risks within the class. Once connections are formed and students discover similarities between themselves and their peers, they become more comfortable. Students understand the challenges their peers have gone through, and vice versa. As a result of students becoming more comfortable with each other and supporting one another, movement exploration grows and students begin using their bodies more as an outlet of expression. Teachers notice students taking risks and using movement to release emotion. The students feel safe doing so and trust that their peers and teacher will not judge their movement expression.

## **Respect**

In the traditional style of learning concert dance, especially ballet, a dance class has stereotypically been considered an unfriendly environment where the teacher is extremely strict, students are required to look identical, and there is no fun. It is an

environment where there is extreme respect toward the teacher, but that is not always reciprocated. Becky Dyer (2010) examined relationships within the dance classroom and how they can affect the identity of the dancer in her article, “The perils, privileges, and pleasures of seeking right from wrong; reflecting upon student perspectives of social processes, value systems, agency, and the becoming of identity in the dance technique classroom”. She stated that one of the challenges of the dance teacher is creating an environment that is safe for our students and fun, while also following traditional dance class etiquette.

In her article, Dyer (2010) explored various strategies to build an environment that is productive and safe to the students. These strategies allow fun to be had among students, while also allowing their voices to be heard. Unlike the traditional dance classroom where the teachers do the talking and students ask very few questions, Dyer encouraged that we allow students the time to provide feedback both on themselves and the class. But we must also look at the way feedback is given and received. This can determine whether a student feels safe within the classroom or feels judged. It is from Dyer’s article that activities such as, “Types of Touch”, “Types of Learners”, and “Writing a Critique” were developed. Allowing students to identify areas where they see disrespect and teaching to those areas builds a safe environment that still has the ability for voices to be heard and students to have fun. Students recognize when there is more freedom for interaction between peers and the teacher, but also know when to focus and listen. Creating a respectful and open environment allows for success and productivity.

## **Addressing the Educational Needs of Low Socioeconomic Populations**

With the target school and population of this study being located in an area of low socioeconomic status, the majority of students lack the support of family at home. Many parents work multiple jobs or late hours; therefore, students are more often than not, on their own when they arrive home from school. Many students may not even have a parent or any sort of positive influence in the household, making it hard for them to learn simple skills of respect and communication. In these cases, the only chance for students to learn these hidden skills are while they are at school; in this case, in the dance classroom. Though students come to class to dance, they also come to learn skills that will take them past the dance classroom. Skills such as respect, communication, collaboration, and building relationships are all taught through dance lessons. Many youths do not continue with dance studies past high school, therefore it becomes the job of the teacher to provide them with skills that will last them a lifetime and benefit them in all areas of life.

Elliot Eisner (2002) and Sue Stinson (2005) both discussed from their individual research that much more is happening in the arts classroom besides the teaching of techniques that are specific to that art form. In addition to teaching students the skills of dance, art, music, or drama, teachers are also developing students' abilities in communication, collaboration, analyzing, predicting, exploring, as well as many other skills. In the dance classroom specifically, teachers are also touching on issues of self-love and body image. This hidden curriculum, though not always apparent to students, is what is going to follow them beyond the arts classroom. Teachers fill students with knowledge of content every day, but what they do not realize is the skills they are



teaching students beyond the content. In addition to content, students are learning skills like responsibility, punctuality, and reliability; important skills for college and career. These are considered “hidden” because students, as well as teachers, do not realize they are present within daily lessons. Many students do not take an arts class after graduation so the skills they learn specific to their art may not be of use later in life. But the hidden skills they learn will follow them and be beneficial to their future career paths.

Author, Paul Tough (2012), shared that poverty can have a large effect on students’ success in school and later in life. In his book, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*, Tough shared that poverty does not always define the success rate of an individual in school and after graduation, but it does play a large factor. Teaching in a school located in a low socioeconomic community, the strategies presented by Paul Tough are highly beneficial to my population of students.

Tough (2012) focused on teaching strategies that help students build character and personality traits that will allow them to be successful outside of school and after graduation. His research shows that when character and personality traits are learned at a young age, it can influence and many times gauge, the future success of an individual. When parents are not home due to financial status and working several jobs, or working late hours due to being in the fields, students are not learning these skills at home. The strategies Tough presents in his book are focused on how these traits can be built in the classroom by the support of the teacher. Developing and implementing activities that focus on character traits and supporting students in the discovery of who they are, is going to allow them to be more successful after graduation. Even though dance may not

be what they continue with after graduation, what they have learned about themselves and who they are as an individual will carry on into the rest of their life, and allow them to have more success.

Eric Jensen (2016) expressed in his book, *Poor Students, Rich Teaching*, that change begins with mindset. Changes begin when the teacher changes their mindset in order to change their students (Jensen, p. 26). Jensen shared that teachers need to get uncomfortable and step away from their norms. When things are not going well in the classroom, it means a change needs to be done. This begins with mindset and not getting stuck into thinking that whatever worked before, must still work. Students are forever changing and so should teachers.

As a teacher, I noticed that strategies that were previously favored were no longer effective. Taking the advice of Eric Jensen, I knew I had to change to adapt to my students. Through observation, I saw that respect, communication, and a sense of belonging were lacking in the Dance I classroom, and I knew I had to make a change. Personally, I had to change my mindset and see what was going on in my students' lives (or lack thereof), and be there to support them in the development of those skills. Change does not come easy, but success does follow positive change.

Student participants in this study are of low socioeconomic status as well as geographically secluded in an area near the Mexico border; these reasons cause the students to struggle academically. Students do not have the support at home, they go home to take care of their families, their commute home could take hours, and the household they live in could be unsafe. All these factors have an effect on student

motivation and will to succeed. Students come to school tired and worried about how they will eat once they leave school. Though motivation is difficult, Eric Jensen, Carole Snider (2013), and Kendra Cherry (2018) shared how we teachers can help find motivation for our students to succeed. There are many factors that play a part in teen's lives. Jensen shared that these factors are, "attitude, cognitive capacity, effort, and focused strategy" (Jensen & Snider, p. 3-4). Each of these can be built through classroom activities and the formation of relationships while at school. Jensen suggests that teachers help students build relationships at school that give them the motivation to succeed. Implementing activities that get students interacting with others and feel as though they belong, even when they may not feel like they belong at home. As activities increase and students begin to feel more comfortable with their peers and teacher, they begin to try harder and increase effort. Each of my students has baggage that can pull them down and prevent them from being successful, but as the teacher, I will support them in building positive social relationships that will be essential for student success in and out of the classroom.

### **Inspirations for the Activities**

Michelle Pearson focuses her classes on the building of relationships among and with her students. She works with a broad population of individuals and she teaches many of them outside the traditional dance classroom setting. In her classes, many learning themes center around discovering who you are as an individual and having pride in that. No matter one's past and no matter the circumstances, each student should be valued in the classroom. In master classes offered at the University of North Carolina

Greensboro for the Master's of Arts in Dance Education Program, Pearson introduced some simple activities she uses within her dance classes. Each of these activities invites the individual to reflect on who they are as a person and what makes them unique. The activities permit students to comfortably share their feelings with the class. I took inspiration from some of Pearson's activities and adapted them for my classroom including, "Photo Collage", "I am...", and "I come from..." (Pearson, 2017). Each activity gives the student the opportunity to share about themselves, while the rest of the class is not being too invasive of personal lives. Students choose their comfort level, but through the building of the activities and the relationships within the class, students feel safer and become more willing to share. The classroom becomes a place where students open up and let go of many worries. They know they have peers and a teacher who understands them and will support them in their struggles.

In her master class at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, Betsy Ward-Hutchinson asked her students to reflect on traits that would describe who they are as a person. This direction was easy for some, while harder for others, but got the students reflecting on how they see themselves as a person. Though it can be difficult for some students to describe who they are, giving students the opportunity to do this allows them to determine who they want to be. Ward-Hutchinson's activity was simple, yet powerful in helping her students decide what kind of person they want to be and what they can do to get there. She built this simple activity into a movement experience in which all students could participate, which involved each student performing their own solo phrase at the same time as everyone else. The teacher helped with the sequencing of phrases, but

allowed students to showcase their own work. Even when words were hard to find, she allowed for other forms of communication and movement to happen within the classroom. Students feel comfortable and connected to themselves and their movement, and through their movement, form connections with their peers within the class.

Dr. Martha Eddy is a Registered Somatic Movement Therapist, as well as the founder of Dynamic Embodiment, a form of somatic education and movement therapy. Her classes focus on teaching somatic practices, as well as developing the vocabulary of Laban Movement Analysis. Using Laban vocabulary when teaching dance gives students a different image of how they should be moving. By using Laban within dance classrooms, dance students are understanding types of movement on a deeper level and are able to more accurately execute the movement we are looking for. Eddy's activities within the classroom rely deeply on communication, specifically in detail. Adapted from her course, DCE 560: The Dancer's Body, at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, "I Teach, You Teach" encourages students to observe and communicate movement ideas to their partner (Eddy, 2017). In the exercise, students recognize the types of movements being done and how they are being executed by the teacher and are then required to communicate in detail to their partner so the movements look the same as the original. The partner then performs the phrase based on the instructions given by their partner, and students observe and compare to the original performed by the teacher. Though I do not necessarily focus on the use of Laban vocabulary in my adaptation of this activity, it still gets students communicating more with each other. Rather than relying on others, or the teacher, to do the communicating for them, in the exercise,

students broaden their vocabulary by observing the successes and failures of their words. Through trial and error, students identify which words and phrases are beneficial to create the movement they want to see from their partner.

Stephanie Rankin (Rankin, 2016) focused her movement and her teaching around authentic movement and improvisation within her workshops and residencies. She recognizes the need for individuality in movement and the authenticity to one's self in personal movement style. In addition, she strives for authentic movement and improvisation that builds connections with peers within the classroom. Physical touch can be both new and scary for many students, so she has created ways to help students feel more confident coming in contact with one another. In her activity, "Types of Touch", she shares safe ways for students to explore touch on others, while also communicating what does not feel comfortable to the person being touched. Becoming comfortable with touch is important in building relationships within the classroom, as well as moving with one another. Improvisation and partner activities become less intimidating because students are more aware of how each person moves and reacts to touch, and understands each other's movement styles.

## **Conclusion**

There are many factors that play into the building of positive social relationships within the Dance I classroom, including communication, a sense of belonging, and respect. Each factor, important in its own way and when paired with others, helps to form even stronger relationships. From the investigation of research, understanding of populations, and adaptations of activities, teachers can implement new strategies into

their regular lessons that focus on relationship building. These small actions lead to important results. Evidence of my investigations and research, how the major ideas have been adapted for the dance classroom, and the assessment results of activities can be found in the next chapters of this thesis.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This project is an investigation of the effectiveness of activities focused on developing respect, communication, and a sense of belonging in order to establish positive social relationships within a beginning level high school dance classroom. This project requires 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to complete pre and post surveys, participate in activities that focus on specific criteria, contribute to small and large group discussion, and complete guided reflections.

#### **Approach**

This study was conducted through the creation and implementation of a set of activities focused on the building of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect within the Dance I high school classroom. The activities took the shape of a toolbox categorized by the skill or skills they focus on building, as well as the sequencing of activities for optimal growth of positive social relationships within the Dance I classroom. Because of the availability of two Dance I classes, one class became the test group and received the toolbox activities, while the other Dance I class became the control group and resumed a regular schedule.

The six-week implementation of this study was broken into three, two-week periods for each of the criteria; communication, a sense of belonging, and respect. At the start of the first two-week period, students from both the control and test group



completed a pre-survey focused on communication within their class, amongst their peers, and with their teacher. The results of this survey helped determine the sequencing of communication activities in the test group. Over a two-week period, the test group received nine different activities that focused on the development of communication both verbally and non-verbally. Some activities were completed in 10-15 minutes, while others took one to two days. At the end of the two-week period, students in the test group were individually assessed by the teacher on their growth in the areas of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect.

At the start of the second two-week implementation period, both control and test group completed a pre-survey on their thoughts of a sense of belonging within their class, amongst their peers, and with their teacher. Students in the test group received nine different activities that focused on building a sense of belonging within the class, amongst their peers, and with their teacher. Activities for sense of belonging usually took up an entire class period, if not two days of class. Again, at the end of the two-week implementation period students were individually assessed by the teacher on their growth in the test areas.

For the last two-week implementation period, students from both groups completed a pre-survey on how they viewed respect within their class; between both peers and the teacher. Students in the test group participated in three different activities that helped in the development and building of respect within the classroom. At the end of the two-week period, students in both the test and control completed a post-survey reflecting on all skills (communication, a sense of belonging, and respect). Questions on

the post-survey mirrored questions on the pre-survey to determine if students believe areas have become better or worse throughout the six-week time period. Students in the test group were individually evaluated one last time by the teacher to determine growth in the three areas.

Each of the activities created and implemented in this study were participation based. Students actively participated in both physical tasks, as well as discussions. Class for the test group usually began with a normal warm up that was familiar to the students, and was then followed by an activity. The majority of activities involved students working with partners or small groups, both assigned by the teacher or student chosen. Throughout each activity, instruction was paused for student reflection with their partner or group. This discussion was completed verbally and was guided with questions from the teacher. Some activities involved the presentation of movement creation with the class, but were often performed with multiple groups at a time. At the end of each activity, students were brought together again for small group discussion that led to large group discussion. All discussions were guided by teacher questioning, but allowed for student input and questioning. Twice throughout the implementation period, students completed a monthly journal not part of the planning of this study. Student responses to both written assignments were beneficial to the outcome of the study.

### **Rationale**

This project was completed by the creation of toolbox activities implemented in a specific sequence for the development of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect within the Dance I high school classroom. I chose to create a toolbox that teachers

can use in their classes when they are noticing a lack of communication, a sense of belonging, or respect among their students. Teachers can go to the toolbox and select activities that they feel would be beneficial to the development of specific skills within their class. Activities were developed to be implemented in addition to regular scheduled lessons so teachers can continue with their already planned lessons.

Each activity was developed to be taught in sequence with others or on its own. Though individual activities can be selected and implemented on their own and have some effect on the students, it is recommended that activities are implemented in the sequence provided. By doing so, this will ensure that activities are scaffolded properly for student success. Many of the activities build upon each other and without prior knowledge of a task, student outcome may not be as positive as it could have been with the scaffolding of activities.

When sequencing activities for this toolbox, I first had to decide the order of the area of focus. Based on the population of students to be tested, I chose communication to be the starting point of activities. Students in the test group had very minimal communication skills with both their peers and the teacher. Many students would not speak at all within a given class period or if they did speak, it had to be prompted by the teacher. In addition, at five months into the school year students within the class did not know their peer's names. I concluded that without communication, other activities within the focus of a sense of belonging and respect were not going to be successful.

After communication activities were implemented, I decided that activities centered around building a sense of belonging were needed. Based on the population of

students, many came from similar backgrounds but did not know that about each other. Since open communication had been formed, students were now able to communicate with each other about themselves. It was also through activities centered around getting to know each other, that activities on respect were introduced. In many activities more than one skill was being developed, but activities were specifically organized for the overall success in developing positive social relationships within the class.

### **Formulation of Activities**

Each activity was created, developed, or adapted from previous activities I had personally experienced or used within my class. Over the course of my six years of teaching, there have been several activities that I have experienced through my attendance of conferences and classes. After each class or conference, I would bring activities back to my classroom to adapt and experiment with my students. I would not necessarily teach them in a sequence, but I noticed that each focused on the development of a different skill.

For the sake of this study, I decided to choose activities that I have adapted and used over the years, but organized and sequenced them in a way that was beneficial to the success of positive social relationships within the classroom. Rather than teaching them at random points throughout the year, I decided to form them into a toolbox. For each of the activities, I created guiding questions that teachers can use to promote discussion within their classroom. Questions can also be used as a means for reflection among students, prior to group discussion. The majority of activities were adapted from other teachers who have been cited in the footnotes of each section. Just as I adapted the

activities for my population of students, other educators may do the same for their students.

### **Experimental Design**

With regard to experimental design, this study includes a comparison group where students were not randomly selected; students were previously enrolled in the Dance I course available at the school. Students in both control group and test group completed pre and post surveys assessing their experience and growth over the six-week period. This project took shape of an experimental study between a test group that received the implementation of activities in addition to regular schedule, while the control group resumed regular scheduled lessons.

### **Participants**

There are sixty-eight participants in this study; sixty-six female and two males, located in a public high school. Students are between the ages of 13 and 18, and are a mix of students between 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Approximately 86% of the students are Hispanic or Latino, 12.3% are White, and 1.8% are Native American. The school is situated approximately 20 miles north of the Mexican border in a low socioeconomic community. The majority of students live south of the school and commute ten miles each day, or some cross the border and come from Mexico. Approximately 80.7% use English as their primary language and 19.3% use Spanish as their primary language; four students are labeled English Language Learners and receive additional support.

The data for this study was collected from pre and post surveys completed during the spring semester of the 2018-2019 school year. The students at that time were enrolled

in Dance I, the lowest level dance class offered at that high school, and were starting their second semester of class. The students dance experience preceding enrollment in this course varied between none to a couple years. Selection of subjects was not manipulated in any way; all sixty-eight students participated in the study based on their enrollment in the class. The pre and post survey data that was collected from this study was used to determine growth from both the control group and the test group. Individual assessments on each of the participants in the test group were also recorded based on the rubric in Figure 1.1 and the growth tracker in Figure 1.2.

Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric				
	4	3	2	1
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student forms and initiates conversation with 100% of peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>Student uses positive language 100% of the time when speaking.</li> <li>Student engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group on a daily basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student forms and initiates conversation with majority of peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>Student uses positive language majority of the time when speaking.</li> <li>Student engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student rarely forms or initiates conversation with peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>Student rarely uses positive language when speaking.</li> <li>Student rarely engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student never forms or initiates conversation with peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>Student never uses positive language when speaking.</li> <li>Student never engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student always listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>Student is aware of tone of voice &amp; body language 100% of the time.</li> <li>Student is patient with various learners in the class.</li> <li>Student accepts others opinions and is open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking majority of the time.</li> <li>Student is aware of tone of voice &amp; body language majority of the time.</li> <li>Student shows patience for various learners majority of the time.</li> <li>Student accepts other's opinions and is open to other's ideas majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student rarely listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>Student is rarely aware of tone of voice &amp; body language.</li> <li>Student rarely shows patience for various learners.</li> <li>Student rarely accepts other's opinions and is rarely open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student never listens &amp; is always talking when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>Student is not aware of tone of voice &amp; body language.</li> <li>Student never shows patience for various learners.</li> <li>Student never accepts other's opinions and is never open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student visibly shows excitement for class when they walk in the door.</li> <li>Student shows the same level of comfort with all students within the class, as well as the teacher.</li> <li>Student seeks the support of their peers or teacher for help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student shows excitement for class majority of the time.</li> <li>Student shows the same level of comfort with 80% of peers within the class.</li> <li>Majority of the time, student shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>Student seeks support from peers or teacher majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student rarely shows excitement for class.</li> <li>Student shows the same level of comfort with 60% of peers within the class.</li> <li>Student rarely shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>Student rarely seeks support from peers or teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student never shows excitement for class.</li> <li>Student shows the same level of comfort with 40% of peers within the class.</li> <li>Student never shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>Student never seeks support from peers or teacher.</li> </ul>

FIGURE 1.1 Individual Assessment Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric (Individual Student)**

	<b>January 18, 2019</b>	<b>February 1, 2019</b>	<b>February 14, 2019</b>	<b>February 22, 2019</b>
<b>Communication</b>				
<b>Respect</b>				
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>				

FIGURE 1.2 Individual Assessment Growth Tracker

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected through the completion of pre and post surveys, individual growth assessments completed by the teacher, and informal reflections in the form of monthly journal entries. At the start of the six-week implementation period, students from both the control group and test groups completed a pre-survey on communication. Over a two-week period, the test group participated in activities focused on building communication while the control group did not. The process of both groups completing a pre-survey was repeated at the start of each two-week implementation period; sense of belonging was implemented second, and respect was implemented last. Once all implementation of activities was complete in the test group, both groups completed a post-survey to analyze growth in the areas of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect.

Within the test group, students were also individually assessed by the teacher on their growth in the areas of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect. The rubric in Figure 1.1 represents the criteria for grading. Individual assessments were completed every two weeks to analyze and track student growth in each of the areas (Figure 1.2). Grading was completed based on observations made during the implementation of activities, as well as students' verbal and written responses. Student scores on individual assessments determined grouping of students for future activities.

Over the course of the six-week implementation period, students from both groups also completed informal reflections that were planned within the regularly scheduled curriculum. Reflections were written and completed individually by each student, and consisted of monthly journals completed at the end of each month. Each of the written reflections was not planned specifically for this study, but student responses reflected the impact of the implementation of activities within the test group. This qualitative data was collected to show student's reflection of their growth from the implementation of activities within their class.

### **Data Analysis**

This study used Microsoft Excel, and the use of charts and graphs to analyze data. Results of the pre and post surveys for both the control and test groups were input into charts that were then represented using bar graphs. Each graph showed the pre and post data for both the test group and the control group. Data was analyzed to determine the impact of the implementation of activities on the test group, as well as the impact of the absence of activities in the control group. Analysis of written reflections was used to



identify areas the students felt they had grown in. Lack of reference to any of the criteria of this study was also analyzed and included in growth data.

### **Instruments**

Located in the appendices are the materials used for the implementation of this thesis project. First are the pre and post surveys (Appendix A) given to both the control and test group before each two-week implementation period, as well as at the end of the six-week implementation period. Next are the toolbox activities listed in sequential order of implementation within the test group (Appendix B), and last is the individual assessment rubric and growth tracker (Appendix C).

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

As stated in Chapter One, this study examined the implementation of activities focused on the development of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect in the Dance I high school classroom in order to build positive social relationships. This chapter is organized in terms of the sequencing of activities over the six-week implementation period, first focusing on the development of open communication within the test group, followed by sense of belonging activities, and lastly, respect activities. This chapter discusses the overall trends that emerged from the students' pre and post surveys, informal written responses, and teacher assessment data of individual student growth.

At the beginning of this study, both the test group and control had thirty-four students in the class. During the testing period, the control group stayed the same, but the test group had some changes. Four weeks into the implementation of activities a new student was added to the course and at five weeks another student moved away. For the entire period of time, one student never showed up for school and another student was absent multiple times a week. Toward the last two weeks of the study, one student stopped coming to class due to not having a ride in the morning. The changes in numbers and attendance among students played a factor in the number of completed post surveys as compared to completed pre-surveys.

## **Communication**

Based on the data collected from the communication sections on both pre and post surveys, data indicated that communication increased in the test group as a result of the implementation of the toolbox activities. In the pre-survey, 17 of the 33 students surveyed rated a three or higher on how open they were to starting conversation with their peers in dance (Figure 1.3), and only 18 of the 33 students rated that they were comfortable initiating conversation with 75% or more of their peers in dance (Figure 1.4). After the implementation of activities, the number of students rating a three or higher on how open they were to starting a conversation with their peers increased from 17 to 26, and 28 students rated that they were willing to initiate a conversation with 75% or more of their peers in dance. In both instances, approximately 10 students increased in their comfortability in communication with their peers.

In comparison to the test group, the control group had very little change from pre-survey to post-survey in regard to how open they were to start a conversation with their peers. In the pre-survey, 21 students rated a three or higher and 23 students rated a three or higher in the post-survey. The data showed that the percentage of peers, students felt comfortable initiating conversation with dropped in the control group from pre-survey to post-survey. Results from the pre-survey showed that 26 students felt comfortable with 75% or more of their peers, but in the post-survey only 23 students felt comfortable initiating conversation with 75% or more of their peers.

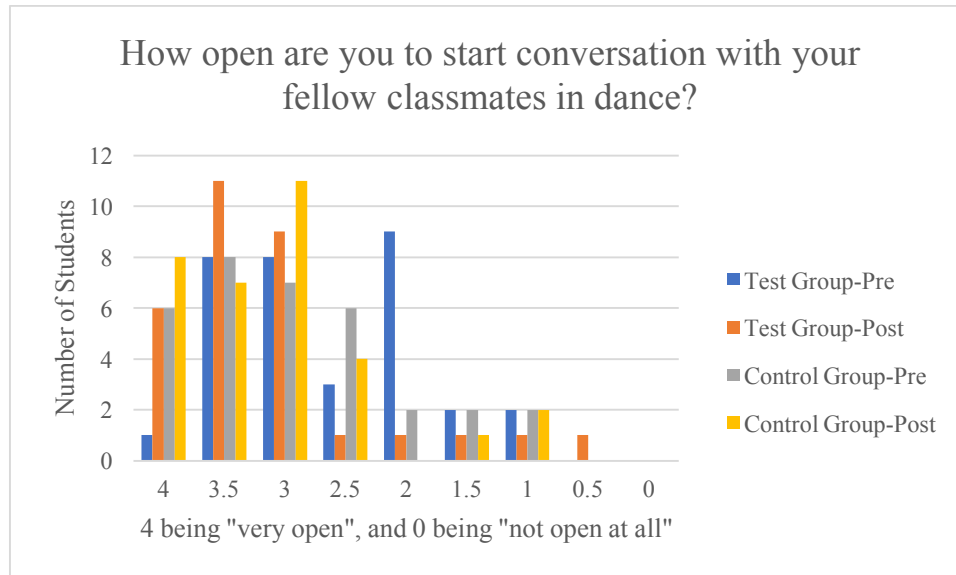


FIGURE 1.3 Peer to Peer Openness to Communication

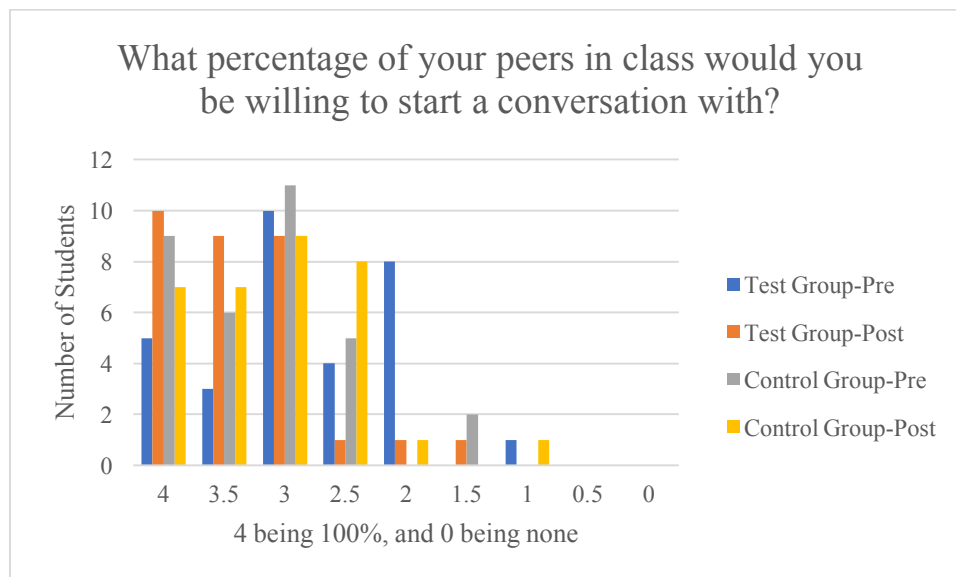


FIGURE 1.4 Peer to Peer Initiation of Communication

Results of peer interactions showed that in the test group, students felt more open to sharing their ideas and opinions with their peers after the implementation of activities, while the control group stayed about the same. From the test group, 17 students rated a

three or higher on how open they were to share their opinions and ideas with their peers in the pre-survey, and that number increased to 24 in the post-survey (Figure 1.5).

Control data shows that for the same question, 19 students rated a three or higher in the pre-survey and it increased to 21 students in the post-survey. One major difference in results between pre and post surveys for test and control group was how students rated their conversations with peers. Pre-survey data from the test group showed that six students marked a four (very successful) when rating the success of conversations with their peers (Figure 1.6). This number increased to 11 students in the post survey after the implementation of activities. Pre-survey results from the control group showed that eight students rated a four (very successful) when stating the success of conversations with their peers, but in the post survey, only four students rated a four. Students in the control group rating a 3.5 or three increased from pre-survey to post-survey.

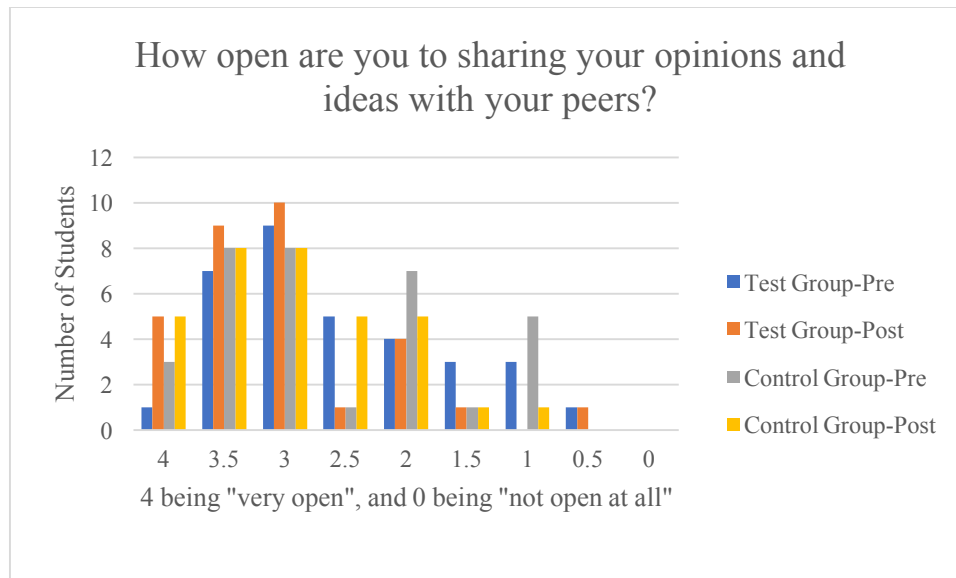


FIGURE 1.5 Peer to Peer Idea and Opinion Sharing

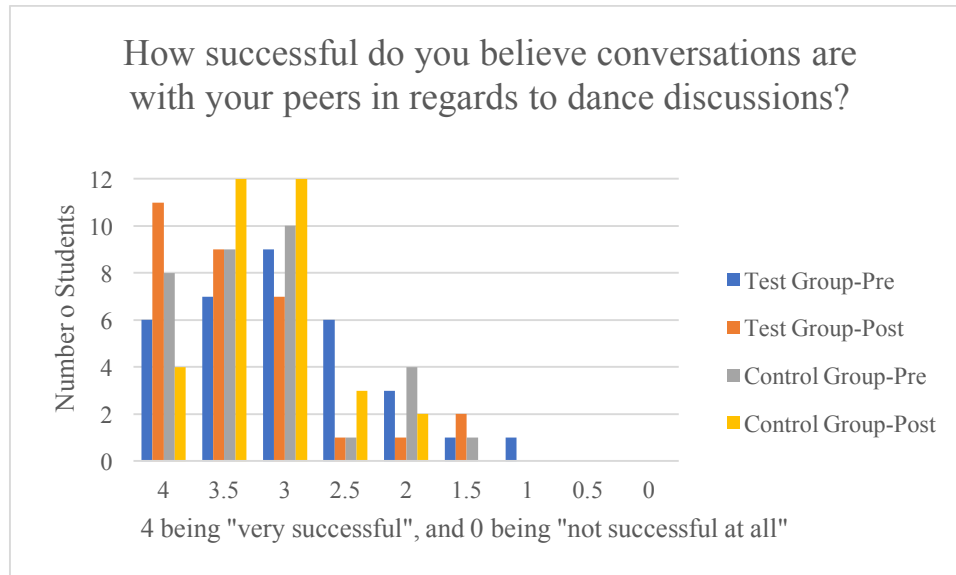


FIGURE 1.6 Success of Classroom Discussions

Student journal reflections from the test group also indicate an increase in communication among students within the class. In the student samples (Figure 3.2-3.5), students state that they have become more comfortable with their peers and they are communicating more with each other. This journal reflection was part of a routine monthly journal assignment completed on the last day of each month, and not designed specifically for this study.

In regard to student-teacher interactions, students in the test and control group stated more often than not, that communication with their teacher was always positive. When asked if students felt the communication between them and their teacher was positive, 24 students in the test group stated “always” in the pre-survey and 27 students stated “always” in the post-survey (Figure 1.7). Data from the control group showed that 29 students stated that they “always” felt communication between themselves and the teacher was positive in the pre and post survey responses.

There was a nine-student increase from pre to post survey in the test group when students were asked how open they were to start a conversation with their teacher (Figure 1.8). Only 14 students rated higher than a three on the pre-survey, but 23 students rated higher than a three on the post survey. Results from the control group on the same question only increased by one student in comparison with the test group.

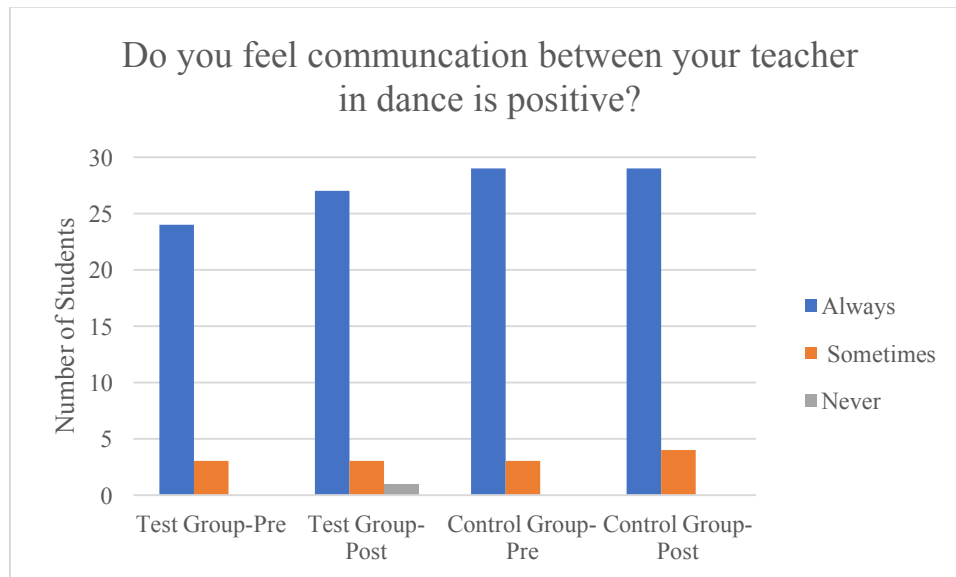


FIGURE 1.7 Student to Teacher Communication

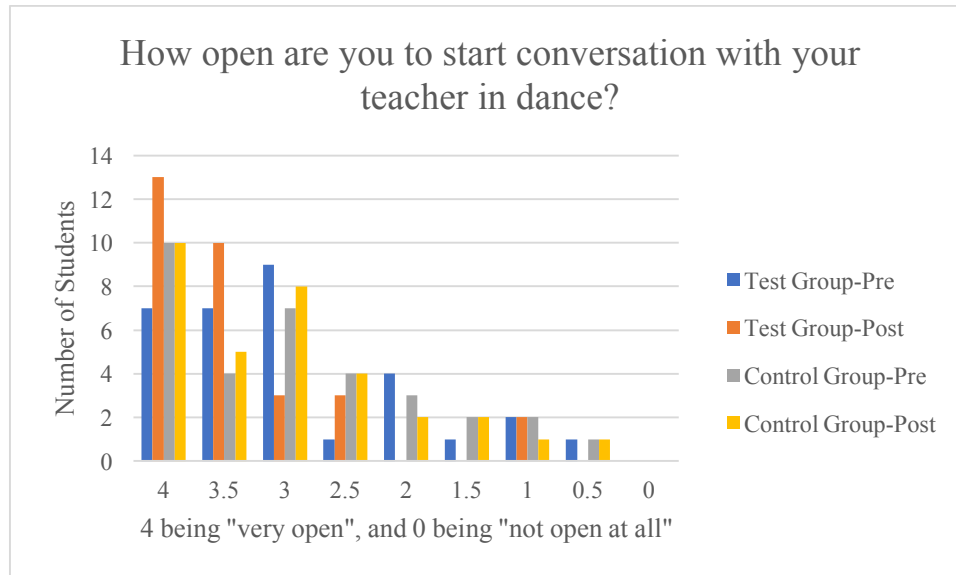


FIGURE 1.8 Student to Teacher Openness to Communication

### Sense of Belonging

At the beginning of the implementation of sense of belonging activities, students in both the test and control completed a pre-survey based on how they felt within the class, amongst their peers, and with their teacher. Data from the test group showed that 12 students always felt supported within the classroom (Figure 1.9) and 11 students were always excited walking into class before the implementation of activities (Figure 2.0). After the completion of activities, the number of students increased in both areas showing that 17 students always felt supported within the class and 15 students were always excited walking into the dance classroom. On the contrary, students in the control group had a decrease in how many students felt welcomed walking into class from pre-survey to post-survey. At the time of the pre-survey 20 students always felt welcomed when walking into class, and post survey results showed that only 16 students always felt welcomed walking into class (Figure 2.1).



Data also showed that comfort level of test group students was much higher at the end of the implementation period, as opposed to the control group which actually decreased in comfort (Figure 2.2). In the test group, 10 students stated they were 100% comfortable in their dance class in the pre-survey, which increased to 15 students in the post-survey. In the control group, 12 students stated they were 100% comfortable in their dance class in the pre-survey, but only eight students stated they were 100% comfortable in the post-survey. There was even one student in the control group that stated they did not feel comfortable at all within their class in the post-survey.

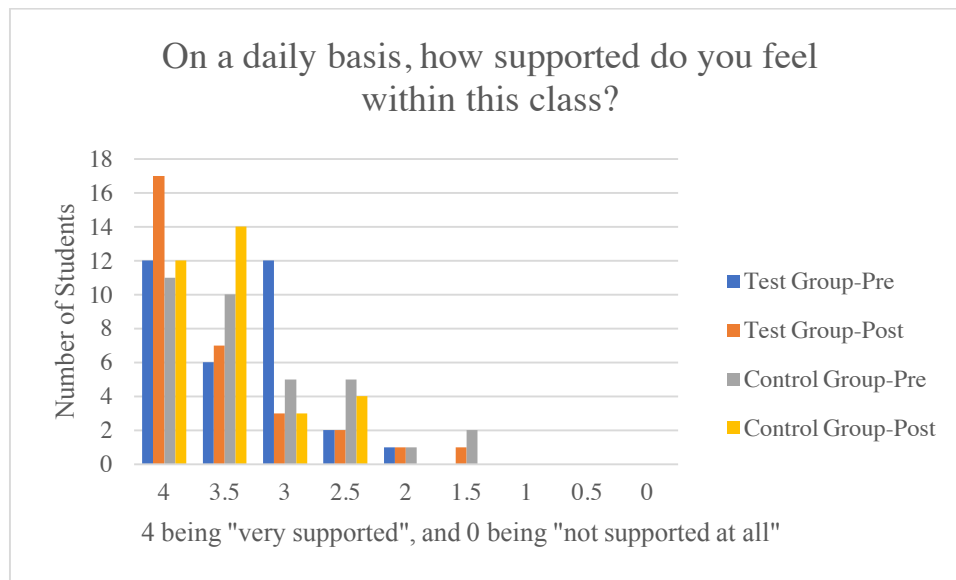


FIGURE 1.9 Student Support in Class

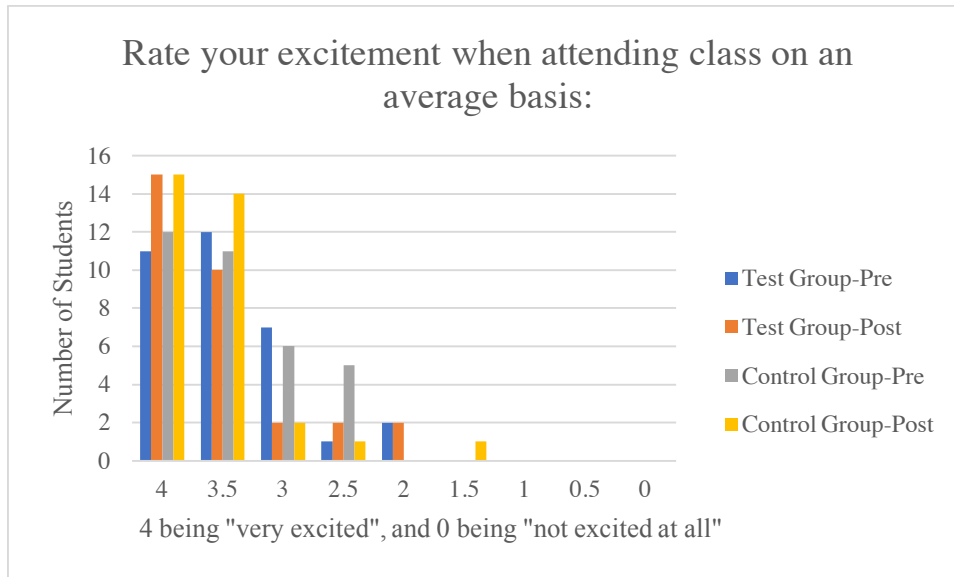


FIGURE 2.0 Student Excitement for Class

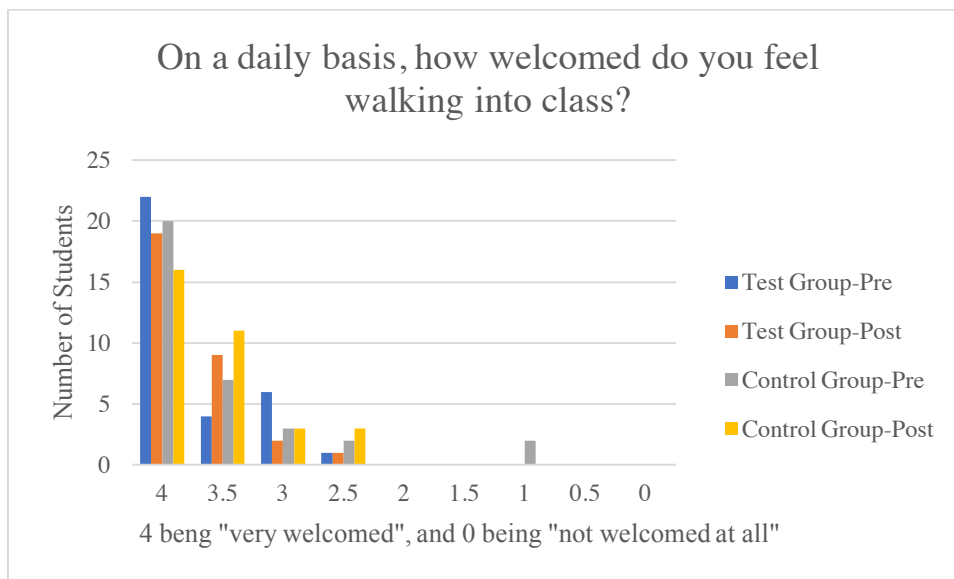


FIGURE 2.1 Welcoming of Students into Class

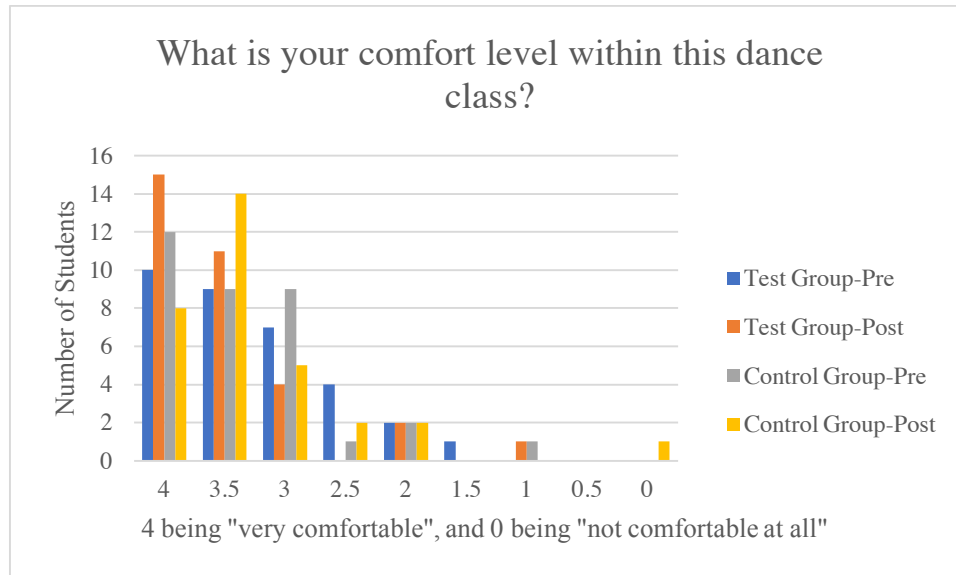


FIGURE 2.2 Student Comfort Level in Class

When asked about how welcomed students felt by their peers within their dance class, students in the test group had a slight increase from 14 to 16 students stating they always felt welcomed, but the students in the control who always felt welcomed by their peers decreased from 24 to 14 from pre-survey to post-survey (Figure 2.3).

Results from the post-survey showed that 18 students in the test group felt as though their opinions and ideas were always valued by their peers, as compared to 17 students stating they sometimes felt their opinions and ideas were valued by peers in the pre-survey (Figure 2.4). Control group data showed in pre and post survey that more students felt their opinions and ideas were only sometimes valued by their peers in dance, as compared to always valued. Lastly, students in the test group had a large increase in their comfort level amongst their peers from their pre-survey to post survey results; six students in the pre-survey stated they were 100% comfortable with their peers as compared to 14 students in the post-survey (Figure 2.5). In contrast, the control group

had a slight decrease in their comfort level amongst their peers in dance as indicated by the slight change in response numbers from seven students to eight students.

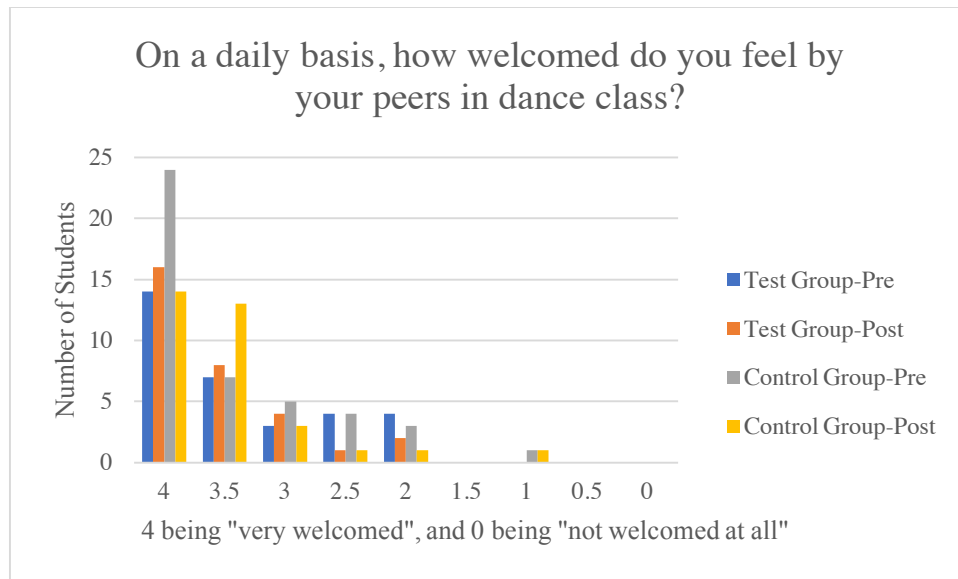


FIGURE 2.3 Welcoming of Students from Peers into Class

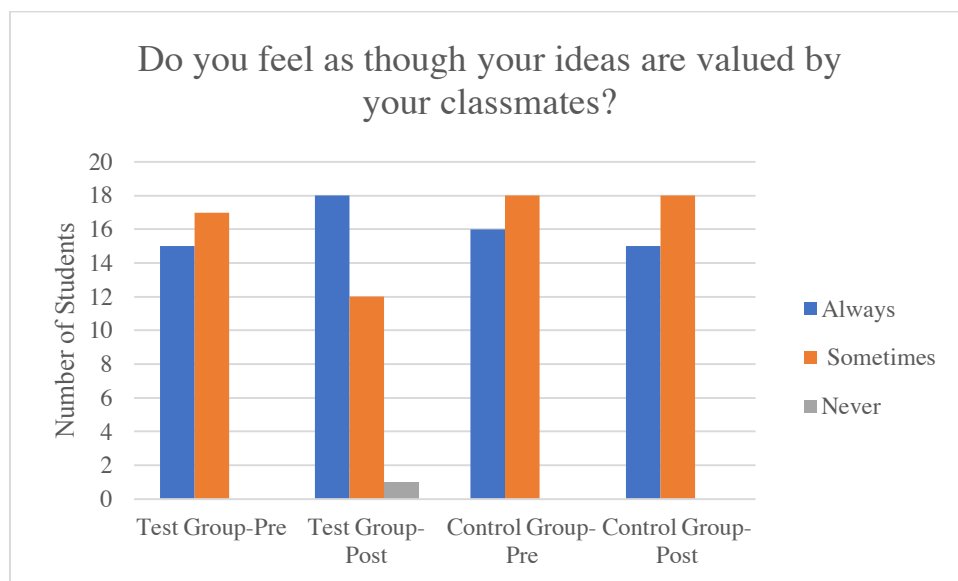


FIGURE 2.4 Value of Ideas by Peers in Class

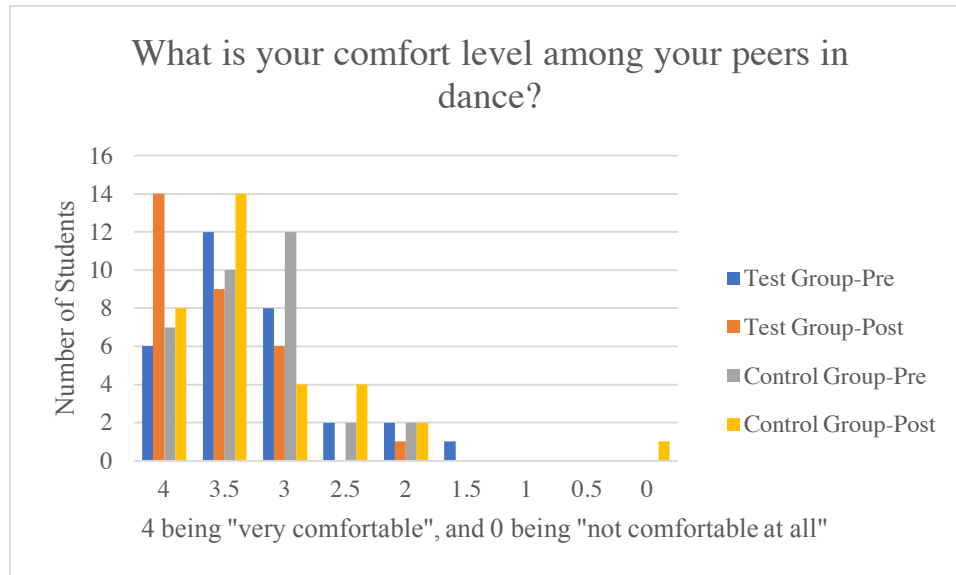


FIGURE 2.5 Student Comfort Level with Peers in Class

Students also completed survey questions based on their feelings of a sense of belonging with their teacher. Pre and post survey data showed that 21 students in the test group always felt welcomed by their teacher in dance class, and this number increased to 24 students always feeling welcomed in the post-survey (Figure 2.6). There was a decrease in the number of students who felt welcomed by their teacher in the control group, from 22 in the pre-survey, to 20 students in the post-survey. Student comfort level with their teacher also increased in the test group from 15 students feeling 100% comfortable with their teacher to 17 students (Figure 2.7). Data in the control group stayed the same for the number of students who felt 100% comfortable with their teacher; however, there was one student in the post-survey who felt less than 25% comfortable with their dance teacher.

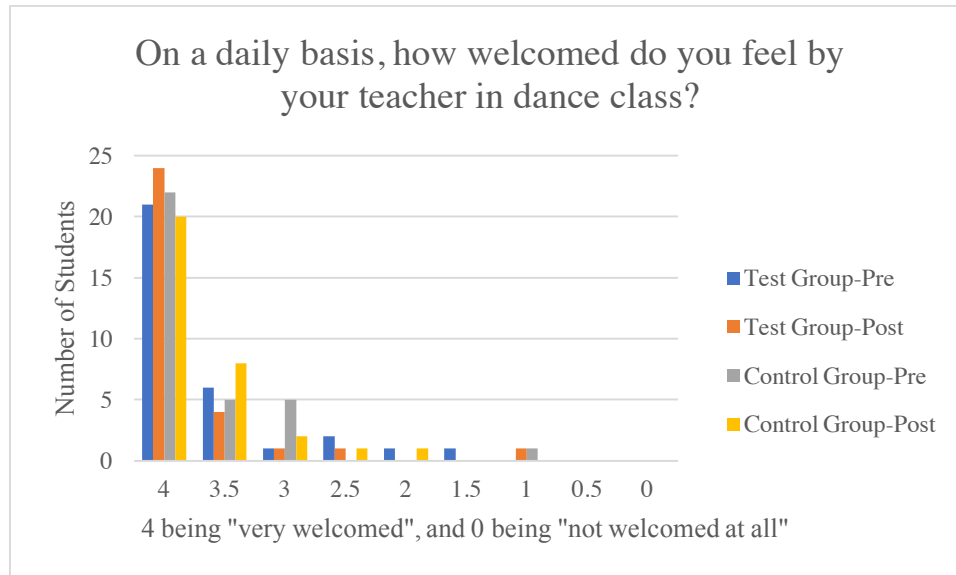


FIGURE 2.6 Welcoming of Students from Teacher into Class

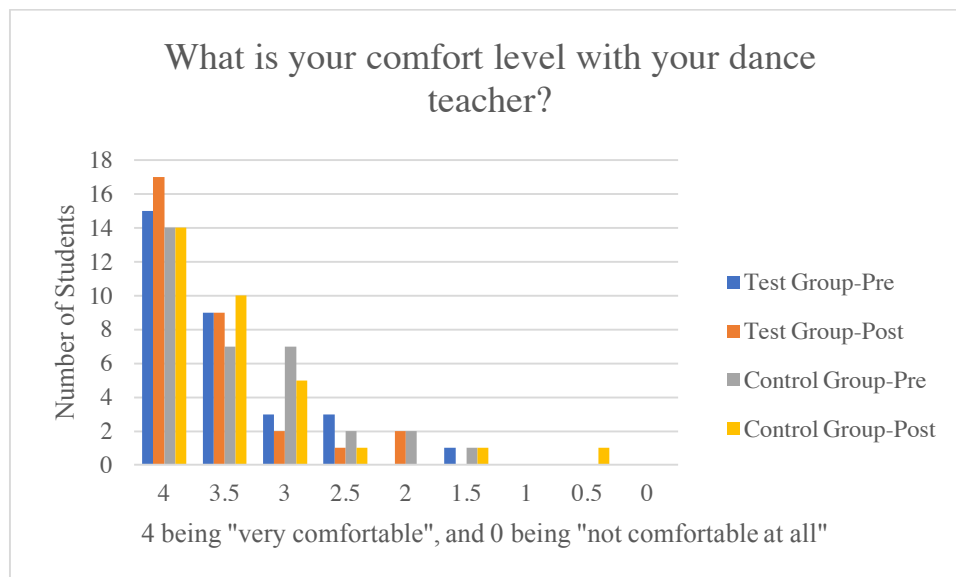


FIGURE 2.7 Student Comfort Level with Teacher in Class

## Respect

As the last part of the implementation of this study, students completed a pre and post survey focused on respect within their dance class. Students were asked about

respect between their peers and teacher, as well as their respect with themselves. Overall, results in almost all areas increased in the test group but decreased in many areas in the control group.

One of the first questions asked was, “On average, how do you rate the level of respect within the dance classroom?”. In the test group, 18 students rated the level of respect to be extremely high in the pre-survey with a slight increase to 19 students in the post-survey. In contrast, results from the control group greatly declined. In the pre-survey, 16 students rated the classroom to be extremely respectful, but in the post-survey only six students rated extremely respectful (Figure 2.8). In both test and control groups, students’ rating of respect from their teacher stayed the same from pre-survey to post survey; test group showing 26 students rated extremely respectful and control group showing 25 students rated extremely respectful (Figure 2.9).

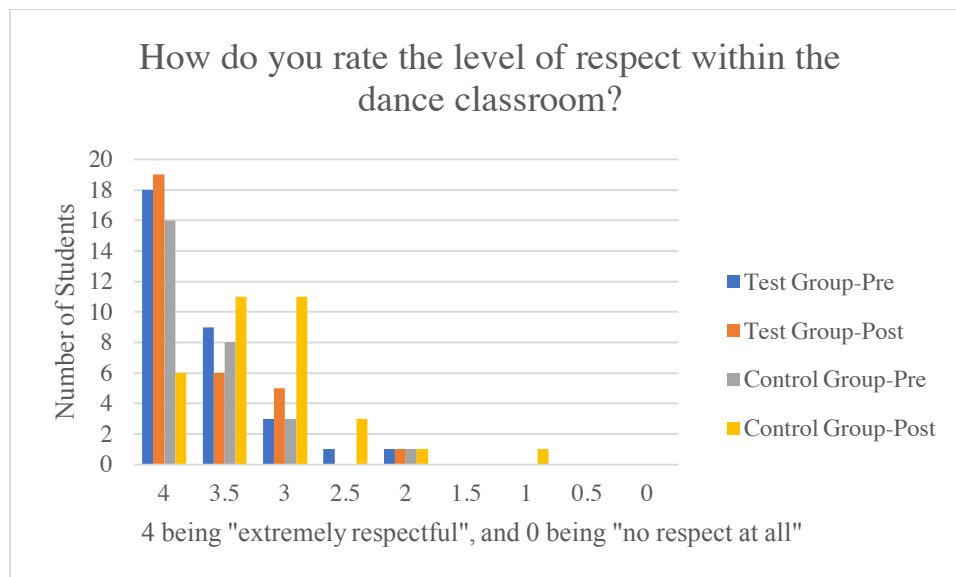


FIGURE 2.8 Level of Respect within Classroom

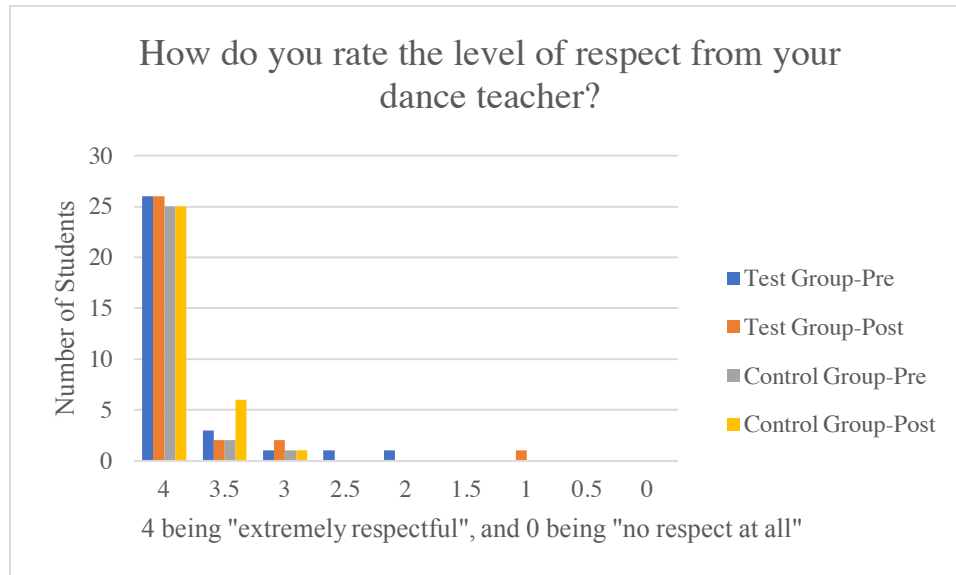


FIGURE 2.9 Level of Teacher Respect within Classroom

In both pre and post survey, students were asked what actions they considered to be disrespectful. Students in both classes stated that talking when others are talking is disrespectful, as well as talking when the teacher is talking. When asked to rate their level of respect when their peers are talking, students in the test group had an increase from 19 to 21 saying they were extremely respectful (Figure 3.0). On the other hand, students in the control had a decrease from 17 to 10 saying they were extremely respectful when their peers were talking. There were similar results in the control group when students were asked to rate how respectful they are when their teacher is talking. In the pre-survey, 23 students said they were extremely respectful, and this decreased to 11 in the post-survey (Figure 3.1). Results from the test group showed a one student decrease from pre to post survey.



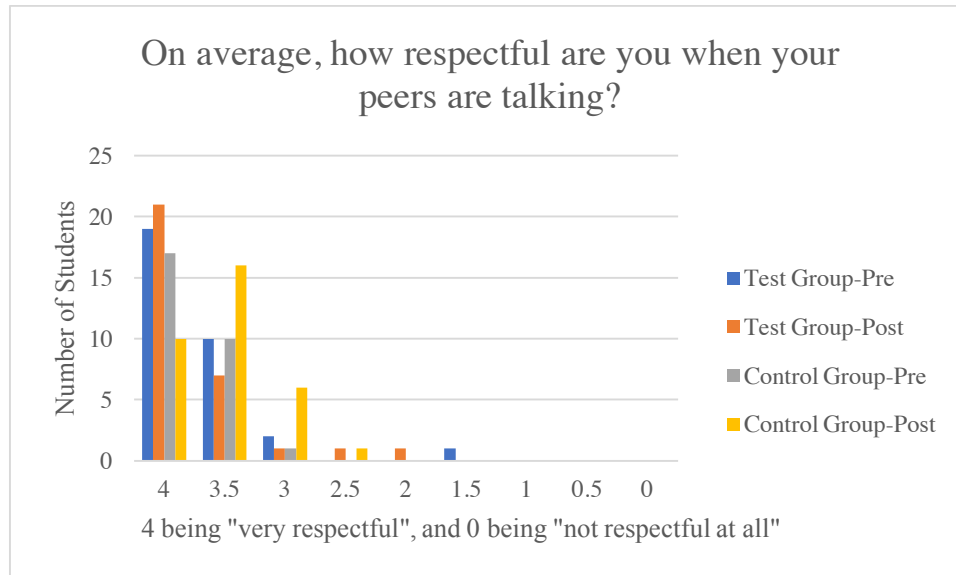


FIGURE 3.0 Student to Student Respect

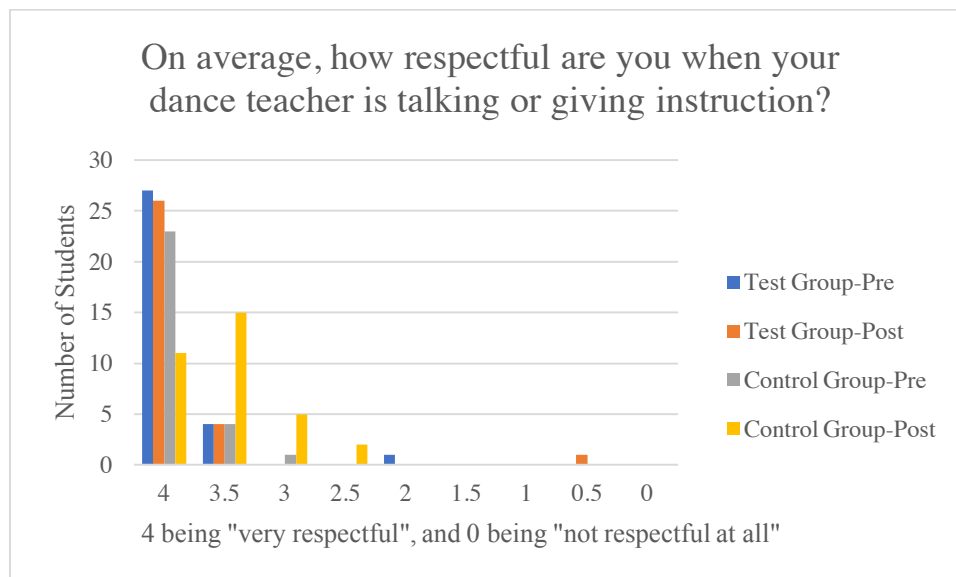


FIGURE 3.1 Student to Teacher Respect

When students completed their regular classroom journal activities for the month of February, which was at the end of the implementation period, students were asked ways in which respect can be improved within their classes (Figure 3.6-3.9). Many students in the test group shared that they believed respect was already good within their

classroom and nothing needed improving. Students stated that they like their class and felt that everyone had respect. Some students in the control group shared that respect could be improved by students being quieter and listening to the teacher. Many stated that too much talking happens when the teacher is trying to speak, and it gets frustrating.

Some suggestions from students in the test group on how to increase respect are to conduct more activities that center around getting to know their peers. Students suggested we engage in more activities that get them communicating with different peers within their class and learn what each person declares a disrespectful action. There were a couple of students who also shared that they would like to do more activities where they critique each other and work on how to provide positive feedback to help each other get better.

### Student Journal Samples

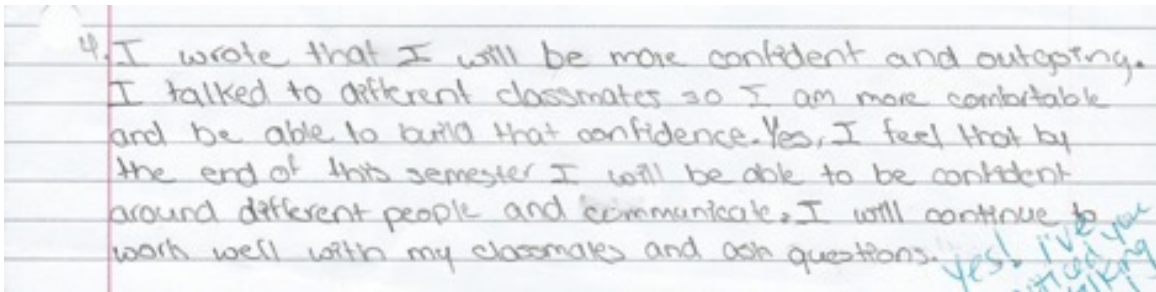


FIGURE 3.2 Test Group Student- January Journal Response

② I enjoyed the partner activities we did, like when we had to lead one another blind folded & the one where we used different parts of our body to massage each other. I liked those activities because they allowed us to be more comfortable with one another. *great!*

FIGURE 3.3 Test Group Student- January Journal Response

2. I enjoyed myself this month in class because we did a lot of partner work. I enjoy partner work because it allows me to meet and get to know the other girls. *yes!*

3. I believe trying to put my weight on my partner was the most challenging. I can overcome this by trusting MYSELF. *yes!*

FIGURE 3.4 Test Group Student- January Journal Response

② I loved this class this month we did a lot of interesting things I experienced a lot of things. It was just a good month overall. I bonded more with my teacher and my classmates. I trust them more.

FIGURE 3.5 Test Group Student- January Journal Response

7. I think we can improve respect by learning about each other and what we think is disrespectful. Knowing what bothers each of us can help us not come out as disrespectful.

FIGURE 3.6 Test Group Student- February Journal Response

7. There is nothing I would like to share about how to improve respect within our classroom because I personally think that we all have respect for each other.

FIGURE 3.7 Test Group Student- February Journal Response

6) If I could change anything in class, I'd change nothing. Personally, I think everything we are doing in class, is a good, reasonable thing.

7) If there's anything to improve the respect in our classroom, I think we should all give each other one word like feedback to a partner. I feel that would not only trust them, but allow us to feel more comfortable with them. We should also allow each other's opinions and ideas to be heard.

FIGURE 3.8 Test Group Student- February Journal Response

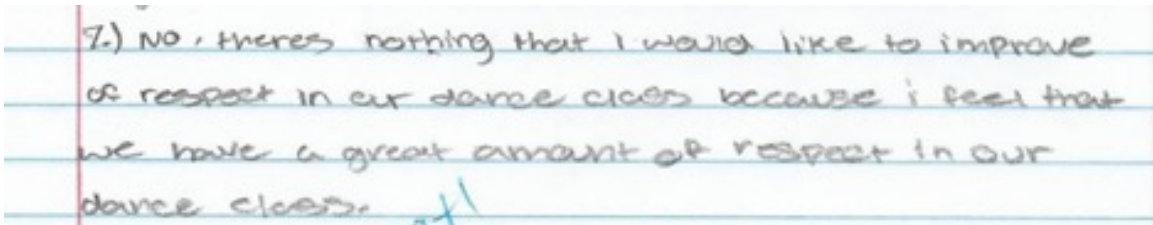
A photograph of a student's handwritten journal entry on lined paper. The text is written in blue ink and reads: "7.) No, theres nothing that I would like to improve of respect in our dance class because i feel that we have a great amount of respect in our dance class." There is a small blue mark at the end of the sentence.

FIGURE 3.9 Test Group Student- February Journal Response

### **Individual Teacher Assessment Data**

Over the course of this study, students were also assessed individually by the teacher based off an assessment rubric created specific to this project (Figure 1.1). The rubric assessed students in the areas of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect over the six-week implementation period. Students were assessed by the teacher four times throughout the study, every two weeks.

It was observed that overall, student scores in each area increased over the course of this study. Some students showed a large increase from beginning to end, while others had a slight increase in all areas. Figures 4.0-4.3 show individual student growth trackers completed by the teacher throughout the implementation of this study.

One trend that was identified after the first assessment of students was that when communication scores were low, scores in respect tended to be higher. Scores for a sense of belonging were also low for those students who scored low in communication. The opposite of this was also true. When communication scores were high, scores for respect tended to be lower. As the study progressed, scores began to even out for all students.

Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric (Individual Student)				
	January 18, 2019	February 1, 2019	February 14, 2019	February 22, 2019
Communication	2	2	3	3.5
Respect	3	3	3.5	3.5
Sense of Belonging	2.5	2.5	2.5	3

FIGURE 4.0 Student A Individual Assessment

Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric (Individual Student)				
	January 18, 2019	February 1, 2019	February 14, 2019	February 22, 2019
Communication	2	2	3	3.5
Respect	4	4	4	4
Sense of Belonging	2	3	3	3.5

FIGURE 4.1 Student B Individual Assessment

Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric (Individual Student)				
	January 18, 2019	February 1, 2019	February 14, 2019	February 22, 2019
Communication	3.5	3.5	4	4
Respect	3	3.5	4	4
Sense of Belonging	3.5	3.5	4	4

FIGURE 4.2 Student C Individual Assessment

	January 18, 2019	February 1, 2019	February 14, 2019	February 22, 2019
Communication	1	3	3	4
Respect	3	3	3.5	3.5
Sense of Belonging	2	2.5	2.5	3

FIGURE 4.3 Student D Individual Assessment

### Conclusion

The above data shows specific results of pre and post surveys in both the test group and control group, as well as student responses to journals and individual teacher assessment. The data was collected prior to the implementation of each focus of the activities, and all post surveys were taken at the end of the six-week period. Journals were completed at the end of each month; the first journal occurred four weeks into the implementation of activities and the second journal was administered at the end of the month, two weeks after the completion of implementation. In the following chapter, the results of the study will be discussed based on teacher observation of classroom behaviors.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Developing positive social environments in the Dance I classroom was my focus for this project. Prior to this study, I observed my Dance I classes and I noticed that students lacked respect for their peers and their teacher, students rarely communicated with each other or their teacher, and they did not feel comfortable with their classmates. I aimed to implement activities to promote increased positive social relationships (student-student and teacher-student), and examine how sequencing and timing have an effect on the success of building relationships. Over the course of this study, I focused on developing the areas of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect.

This project examined the implementation of teaching strategies that were designed and measured for the specific focus on improving communication, a sense of belonging, and respect within a level one high school dance class, and whether these strategies increased positive social relationships among the students and with the teacher. This thesis involved a variety of activities focused on developing communication, a sense of belonging, and respect, as well as reflective surveys that students completed before and after the implementation of activities.

#### **Review of the Methodology**

For this thesis project, I created a toolbox of activities that focused on the areas related to the delivery of dance instruction with positive social and emotional benefits of



communication, a sense of belonging, and respect. The activities were implemented over a six-week time period within the context of the regular dance technique curriculum. New activities that were adapted from traditional classroom strategies and methods were also developed that aligned specifically to the nature of the dance classroom. These newly developed activities were researched, applied, and measured so that they would work specifically to benefit students in the dance classroom. This study contained a control group and a test group. Both groups completed pre and post surveys, as well as a journal reflection once per month, but only the test group received the implementation of activities from the toolbox.

### **Summary of the Results**

Results of this study were collected through the completion of pre and post surveys in both the test and control groups, as well as student-written reflections to monthly journals. Students in both groups completed pre-surveys prior to the start of the implementation of the specific criteria and completed all post-surveys at the end of the six-week implementation period. There were sixty-eight students total in the study, thirty-four students in each group.

Results from the communication surveys showed there was an increase in communication within the test group from the implementation of activities. Students in the test group showed an increase in the number of students open to starting conversation with their peers, as well as the percentage of peers they would be willing to initiate conversation with. Test group data showed that students became more comfortable

sharing their opinions and ideas with their peers, and students became more open to starting conversation with their teacher.

Data from a sense of belonging and respect surveys had the largest difference between the test group and the control group. In almost all areas of a sense of belonging, students in the test group had an increase in students feeling welcomed and supported within the classroom, among their peers, and from their teacher. Students in the test group also had an increase in the number of students who felt comfortable within their dance class. Control data showed a decrease in students who felt welcomed in their dance class, as well as a number of students who felt comfortable in class.

In the area of respect, data from the test group also had an increase in how students rated the level of respect within the classroom. Students in the test group felt as though their class and peers became more respectful after the implementation of activities, while the control group had a large decrease in levels of respect. There was a large decrease in the number of students who stated they were respectful when their peers or teacher were talking, whereas in the test group there was a large increase in both areas.

### **Discussion of the Results**

During the first two weeks of my six-week implementation period, I taught activities focused on communication within the dance classroom. Prior to the implementation of activities, students in the test group classroom did not voluntarily speak with each other. Students would come into class and sit quietly in their attendance spots; there would be no interaction from students before class began. Even during class activities, I had to place students with partners and groups, and provide a specific

question for them to discuss with their peers. Without a guided question, students would merely sit next to each other without speaking. Even when placing students with partners or groups, they would merely sit silently next to each other.

After the first week of implementing communication activities, I immediately began to see improvement in student interaction. There was still minimal student interaction prior to class beginning, but when placed with a partner or in groups, students immediately began interacting with their peers. There began to be less discussion that was prompted by the teacher and more interaction initiated by students.

Throughout the implementation of communication activities, students became more comfortable with each other. Students shared in their monthly journal that because they are interacting more and with more peers within the class, they are more comfortable participating in class. I also noticed an increase in communication amongst myself with the students. During small group discussions, I would walk around the classroom and join in with groups to hear what they were talking about. Prior to this study, students would often become quiet when I came over, but during and after the activities focused on communication, students welcomed me into their group. Students would continue their discussion and even began to include me in their conversation. The implementation of communication activities was extremely beneficial to both the students and me and had great success within the classroom.

Throughout this project, communication became part of many of the activities, including many of the sense of belonging activities. Without communication, the sense of belonging activities would not have been as successful. One activity that began being

focused on developing a sense of belonging among students and teacher, eventually shifted to a focus on communication. “Comment Box” began as students writing anonymous questions or comments that they did not feel comfortable enough to ask the teacher. Each week I would read through the comments and respond to the questions. The students were allowed to ask any questions they wished, including non-dance related topics. Eventually, students stopped putting comments in the box and began coming directly up to me to ask a question. This was evidence that students felt more comfortable not only communicating but felt as though they trusted me to answer their questions.

Over the course of the implementation of a sense of belonging activities, students were challenged many times to think in depth about experiences in their lives. Sometimes these activities put them in a very vulnerable position since they do not usually share their stories with many peers. Each day students became more and more open, but I noticed that sometimes students still held back. When asked to share, students were never required to share everything. Though some students were comfortable sharing all of their writing, many students only chose specific parts. I did observe that even though discussion was limited for the activities that allowed students to open up more about their lives, their movement was more expressive relating to these topics. I noticed that students began to use their bodies to tell their story more than they could communicate it verbally.

I also noticed that throughout the sense of belonging activities, and possibly also a result of building communication skills, students began to approach each other more for support. Rather than sitting quietly when confused or unsure of what to do, students began seeking their peers or their accountability partners. Students began to do this

without my prompting, which showed that activities were having a positive impact on the students.

The last few activities of this study focused on respect and developing respect within the classroom. There was one respect activity that was completed early on, which was “Goals, Expectations, and Pet Peeves”. This activity allowed students to understand how each other “ticked” as well as connected students with peers who had similar goals and expectations. A poster was created with all the class expectations and was hung up above the mirror for students to see each day when they walked into class. Students would use this poster as a personal reminder, as well as a reminder for their peers to adhere to the expectations they created as a class.

Having developed communication skills within the class prior to the activities about respect, resulted in more success when completing respect activities. Students were able to communicate openly with their peers and understand their peers when working with them. When demonstrating many of the partnering or touch activities, I observed students communicating with their partners what felt good and what did not. Students were even checking in on their partners to make sure that as they progressed through touch activities their partner still felt comfortable. When students stated that something hurt or felt weird, they were able to appropriately communicate that to their partner and their partner changed what they were doing.

Respect in the classroom also increased in regards to talking when peers or the teacher were talking. Though there was very little background chatter when this study first began, students still identified in the pre and post surveys that there was less respect

at the beginning than compared to the end. As students became aware of actions that could be interpreted as disrespectful, I began to see changes in student actions within the class. If there was talking when someone else began to speak, students would respectfully tell their peers to quiet down. Student body language also changed in that students became more aware of their facial expressions and were more invested in conversation. As a result, respect within the classroom increased and the classroom environment became a positive and productive area.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the implementation of activities focused on the development of communication, a sense of belonging, and respect in the Dance I high school classroom had a positive impact on positive social relationships in the classroom. Students from the test group increased in communication skills, increased in their sense of belonging amongst their peers and teacher, and increased the level of respect between peers and teacher in the classroom. Without the direct focus of these skills through the implementation of toolbox activities, students in the control group did not develop the skills necessary to have strong positive social relationships within their classroom. Using specifically designed activities to develop positive social relationships will enhance the student learning environment, as well as student success. This study shows that students who are involved in activities that focus on specific skills, will have more success not only individually, but as an entire class.

## **Recommendations for Further Study**

This thesis project is part of an ongoing study. Each year new students come into the Dance I classroom and it is crucial that positive social relationships are developed and established for success. The toolbox of activities created from this project will be used in my future classrooms to ensure that students are developing communication skills, form a sense of belonging within the class, and develop skills on how to behave and interact respectfully.

As a future recommendation for this study, I encourage the implementation of activities at the beginning of the school year. Introducing communication activities early on in the school year will allow students to develop their communication skills earlier, and encourage students to communicate with their peers and teacher sooner. Each year I have two sections of Dance I so I plan to continue to implement this toolbox on an annual basis to measure the success of classes and development of positive social relationships. I have not yet determined if each year I will implement activities in both sections of Dance I, or just one section to compare the data between a test group and control group.

In the future, I also plan to implement toolbox activities within my higher-level dance classes. Even though many students in the higher-level classes have already developed these skills, I believe that the toolbox activities will be beneficial to the bonding of new classes at the beginning of the school year. Since the higher-level classes are a mix of students from the previous year classes, there is a period of time where students need to get to know one another and learn to communicate with new people that were not in their class the previous year. In coming years, I plan to track data during the

implementation of toolbox activities in all levels of classes, as well as at various times of the school year.

Lastly, in the future, I would like to open up the toolbox to other fine arts educators, as well as teachers in the traditional classroom to assist them in the development of positive social relationships within their classrooms. I believe that the activities I have created and compiled can be beneficial beyond the dance classroom, and all students deserve to be in an environment with strong positive social relationships.

### **Impact on Personal Professional Practice**

This thesis project has allowed me to look beyond the dance classroom that has traditionally been focused around technique and choreography and allowed me to create a dance classroom focused around the development of positive social relationships. By including new methods and strategies through the implementation of toolbox activities, I have allowed students the opportunity to learn dance while developing skills they can use beyond the dance classroom. My experience while completing this project has allowed me to recognize the needs of my students first and what is necessary in order to have a successful classroom.

As a dance educator, this project challenged me to research strategies and methods for traditional classrooms and identify how to adapt those strategies to the dance classroom. There was limited dance research done in regards to how communication, a sense of belonging, and respect skills were taught within the dance classroom, so I had to identify and develop activities that specifically allowed students to develop these skills. Some activities I had taught before in class, but I had never taught the activity with the



focus of positive social relationships in mind. I believe that this project challenged me to find focus in my previously used activities and scaffold activities in a way that was beneficial to student learning. I am thankful for the challenges this project gave me and I look forward to continuing my study of how the development of positive social relationships can lead to success within the dance classrooms.

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APPENDIX A

## Communication Pre-Survey

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR PEERS** in dance class:

1. **On average, how open are you to start conversation with your fellow classmates in dance? (4 being very open and 0 being not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

2. **What percentage of your peers in class would you be willing to start a conversation with? (4 being all of them and 0 being no one).**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

3. **How open are you to sharing your opinions and ideas with your peers? (4 being you are open with everyone and 0 being you are not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

4. **Do you feel communication between your peers in dance is positive?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

5. **Do you believe the feedback you receive from your peers is given in a positive & constructive way?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

6. **When put in the position to work with peers, are you open to collaboration?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

7. **On average, how successful do you believe conversations are with your peers in regard to dance class discussion? (4 being very successful and 0 being not successful at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR TEACHER** in dance class:

**8. On average, how open are you to start conversation with your teacher in dance? (4 being very open and 0 being not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**9. How open are you to sharing your opinions and ideas with your dance teacher? (4 being you are open with your teacher and 0 being you are not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**10. Do you feel communication between you and your teacher in dance is positive?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**11. Do you believe the feedback you receive from your teacher is given in a positive & constructive way?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**12. Going beyond the dance class, how willing are you to go to your dance teacher for support or help in other areas of school/ life? (4 being you are very willing to go to your teacher for support and 0 being you are not willing to at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

## Sense of Belonging Pre-Survey

Please answer the following questions in regards to the **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**:

1. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel walking into class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

2. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel within this class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

3. Rate your excitement when attending class on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

4. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued in class discussions?

Always

Sometimes

Never

5. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to what you experience in the dance classroom?

6. What is your comfort level within this dance class? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0



Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR PEERS** in dance class:

**7. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel by your peers in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**8. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel by your peers in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**9. Rate your excitement when seeing your peers in dance on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**10. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued by your classmates?**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**11. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to your experience among your peers in the dance classroom?**

**12. What is your comfort level among your peers in dance? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**13. Going beyond the classroom, do you feel confident turning to your dance peers when you need help or support? Why or why not?**

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR TEACHER** in dance class:

**14. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel by your teacher in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**15. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel by your teacher in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**16. Rate your excitement when seeing your dance teacher on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**17. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued by your dance teacher?**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**18. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to your experience between you and your teacher in the dance classroom?**

**19. What is your comfort level with your dance teacher? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**20. Going beyond the classroom, do you feel confident turning to your dance teacher when you need help or support? Why or why not?**

## Respect Pre-Survey

- 1. How do you rate the level of respect within the dance classroom? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- a. How do you rate the level of respect among your peers in dance? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- b. How do you rate the level of respect from your dance teacher? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- 2. On average, how respectful are you of your peers' opinions & ideas? (4 being very respectful and 0 being not respectful at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- a. On average, how respectful are you of your dance teacher's opinions & ideas? (4 being very respectful and 0 being not respectful at all).**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- 3. On average, how respectful are you when your peers are talking?**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

- a. On average, how respectful are you when your dance teacher is talking or giving instruction?**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**4. When communicating with peers, do you do so in a respectful manner?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**a. When communicating with your dance teacher, do you do so in a respectful manner?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**5. On average how well do you respect yourself? (4 being you always respect yourself and 0 being you don't respect yourself at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**6. What are specific actions that you believe could come off as disrespectful to your peers?**

**7. What are specific actions that you believe could come off as disrespectful to your dance teacher?**

## Communication Post-Survey

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR PEERS** in dance class:

1. **On average, how open are you to start a conversation with your fellow classmates in dance? (4 being very open and 0 being not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

2. **What percentage of your peers in class would you be willing to start a conversation with? (4 being all of them and 0 being no one).**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

3. **How open are you to sharing your opinions and ideas with your peers? (4 being you are open with everyone and 0 being you are not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

4. **Do you feel communication between your peers in dance is positive?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

5. **Do you believe the feedback you receive from your peers is given in a positive & constructive way?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

6. **When put in the position to work with peers, are you open to collaboration?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

7. **On average, how successful do you believe conversations are with your peers in regard to dance class discussions? (4 being very successful and 0 being not successful at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR TEACHER** in dance class:

**8. On average, how open are you to start conversation with your teacher in dance? (4 being very open and 0 being not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**9. How open are you to sharing your opinions and ideas with your dance teacher? (4 being you are open with your teacher and 0 being you are not open at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**10. Do you feel communication between you and your teacher in dance is positive?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**11. Do you believe the feedback you receive from your teacher is given in a positive & constructive way?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**12. Going beyond the dance class, how willing are you to go to your dance teacher for support or help in other areas of school/ life? (4 being very willing to go to for support and 0 being not willing to at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

## Respect Post-Survey

**13. How do you rate the level of respect within the dance classroom? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**c. How do you rate the level of respect among your peers in dance? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**d. How do you rate the level of respect from your dance teacher? (4 being extremely respectful and 0 being no respect at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**14. On average, how respectful are you of your peers' opinions & ideas? (4 being very respectful and 0 being not respectful at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**b. On average, how respectful are you of your dance teacher's opinions & ideas? (4 being very respectful and 0 being not respectful at all).**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**15. On average, how respectful are you when your peers are talking?**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**b. On average, how respectful are you when your dance teacher is talking or giving instruction?**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**16. When communicating with peers, do you do so in a respectful manner?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**b. When communicating with your dance teacher, do you do so in a respectful manner?**

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**17. On average how well do you respect yourself? (4 being you always respect yourself and 0 being you don't respect yourself at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**18. What are specific actions that you believe could come off as disrespectful to your peers?**

**19. What are specific actions that you believe could come off as disrespectful to your dance teacher?**



## Sense of Belonging Post-Survey

Please answer the following questions in regards to the **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**:

**20. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel walking into class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**21. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel within this class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**22. Rate your excitement when attending class on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**23. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued in class discussions?**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**24. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to what you experience in the dance classroom?**

**25. What is your comfort level within this dance class? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR PEERS** in dance class:

**26. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel by your peers in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**27. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel by your peers in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**28. Rate your excitement when seeing your peers in dance on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**29. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued by your classmates?**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**30. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to your experience among your peers in the dance classroom?**

**31. What is your comfort level among your peers in dance? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**32. Going beyond the classroom, do you feel confident turning to your dance peers when you need help or support? Why or why not?**

Please answer the following questions in regards to **YOUR TEACHER** in dance class:

**33. On a daily basis, how welcomed do you feel by your teacher in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**34. On a daily basis, how supported do you feel by your teacher in dance class? (4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**35. Rate your excitement when seeing your dance teacher on a daily basis (4 being very excited and 0 being not excited at all):**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**36. Do you feel as though your ideas are valued by your dance teacher?**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**37. When you hear the phrase “sense of belonging”, how does that relate to your experience between you and your teacher in the dance classroom?**

**38. What is your comfort level with your dance teacher? (4 being 100% comfortable, 0 being not comfortable at all)**

4.....3.5.....3.....2.5.....2.....1.5.....1.....0.5.....0

**39. Going beyond the classroom, do you feel confident turning to your dance teacher when you need help or support? Why or why not?**

APPENDIX B

Toolbox for the Development of  
Positive Social Relationships within the  
Level I High School Dance Classroom

Created by:  
Jennifer A. Muisenga Florey

**Coding for Focus of Activities**

Communication: C

Sense of Belonging: S

Respect: R

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Alliteration Name Game

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 5-10 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** no materials needed for this activity

**Experience Overview:** Students need no experience to complete this activity

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will use alliteration with their name to help students memorize their classmates' names.
- The learner will work on memorizing their classmates' names.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What alliteration did you come up with for your name? Why did you choose that alliteration?
- Which alliterations were easiest for you to remember? Which were the hardest?
- Were you able to remember all of your classmates' names?
- How does learning your classmates' names help with building relationships in dance class?

**Core Activities:**

1. Have students stand in a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder.
2. Give students one to two minutes to come up with an alliteration for their name (Joyful Jen, Amazing Amy, etc.).
3. Go around the circle and have each student share their alliteration and have entire class repeat each student's alliteration afterwards.
4. Go around the circle doing the same activity a second and third time.
5. Open up a challenge for students to see if they can name everyone's name and alliteration without any help.
6. Give a small reward to students who are able to complete the challenge.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Land Mines<sup>1</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10-15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Bandanas/ blindfolds, lots of various size objects to fill the space and create obstacles

**Experience Overview:** Students need no experience to execute this activity

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will build trust with a partner by being led around the classroom while being blindfolded.
- The learner will build voice and specific language while communicating with their partner to lead them through the space safely.
- The learner will become comfortable with one of their peers while they trust to be led across the room safely, as well as knowing that their partner trusts in their guidance.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Which role were you most comfortable executing? Why is that? What made that more comfortable for you?
- Which role was least comfortable executing? Why is that? What would have helped to make you feel more comfortable?
- What challenges did you face while doing this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself while doing this activity?
- Do you feel more comfortable than you did before with the person you worked with? Why or why not?

**Core Activities:**

1. Break students up into partners (try to pair students up with people they do not know very well). Make sure students introduce themselves and know each other's names.
2. Have each set of partners label themselves either "1" or "2". Bring one set of partners out of the room where you will have them put on a blindfold. They will wait there until their partner comes to get them.

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<sup>1</sup> Land Mines was developed from an activity presented during a Youth Education Series Leadership Workshop at Disneyland in Anaheim, CA.

3. With the group that is still in the room, explain to them that you will use all the objects available to fill the space and create obstacles. Do so quickly and quietly.
4. Inform inside partners that they are going to need to lead their partner across the room using verbal cues only. They may not touch their partner in any way. Once they reach the other side, they must wait until the last person crosses before taking off their blindfolds.
5. Open door and allow partners to find their blindfolded partner. They can begin leading them across the room right away. When the last one crosses, allow students to take off blindfolds.
6. Hand off the blindfold and do the same activity with the other partner
7. This time when half the group leaves the room, inform students that we are going to put everything away. Pretend to be moving it around to confuse the outside partner.
8. Just like before, students can only use verbal cues to move their partner and this time they are pretending there are obstacles for their partner to move around. Once the last person crosses, students can take off blindfolds.
9. Enjoy a little laugh as students see that there was nothing to be moving around this time 😊
10. Chat about how whether things are easy or difficult, each person sees it in a different way and needs the support of another person.
11. Using guiding questions to create discussion

**Area of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** I Teach, You Teach<sup>2</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10-15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** 15-20 second movement phrase (more gestural or pedestrian)

**Experience Overview:** Students should have some movement experience. This activity does not require extensive technique, but students do need to be comfortable moving and explaining how certain steps are executed (dependent on the phrase to be taught).

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will learn and understand the execution of a short movement phrase to teach their partner.
- The learner will explain to their partner the movement to be executed without demonstration or the answering of questions.
- The learner will interpret movement executed by the teacher in a way that allows them to explain and teach to their partner.
- The learner will interpret their partner's explanation of the movement phrase through execution of movement.
- The learner will determine appropriate words to guide their partner in the learning of the movement phrase without demonstration.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What challenges did you face while learning the phrase from your main teacher? How did you overcome those challenges?
- How did having your teacher not talk effect how well you learned the movement phrase?
- Did you feel you were able to accurately explain the movement phrase to your partner without the need for demonstrating? Why or why not?
- What challenges did you face while learning the phrase from your partner? How did you overcome those challenges without talking?
- Did you feel your partner was able to clearly give you direction on how to execute a movement? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about communication after doing this activity?

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<sup>2</sup> I Teach, You Teach was inspired by an activity presented by Dr. Martha Eddy during a course at University of North Carolina Greensboro.



- Do you believe communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is important in the dance classroom? Why or why not?

**Core Activities:**

1. Break students into partners that they do not usually work with.
2. Send one partner outside the classroom, while the other stays inside.
3. Without talking, teach the students inside the classroom the 15-20 movement phrase. Students may ask questions, but the teacher is not allowed to talk.
4. Once students are comfortable with the phrase and have it memorized, tell them that they must teach the phrase to their partner. The challenge is that they cannot demonstrate the movement at all and their partner is not allowed to ask questions.
5. Send students to find their partner and give them five to ten minutes to teach the phrase.
6. Once time is up, have all students come back into the classroom.
7. Have the students that learned the phrase from their partner come into center. Those students will demonstrate the phrase they learned from their partner...don't worry about what others are doing!
8. Have students do it a couple times, before having the teaching partner come up and show the phrase.
9. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two phrases
10. Then have the main teacher show the phrase to all students. Have a group discussion about the similarities and differences
11. Use guiding questions to spark discussion.

**Areas of Focus:** Sense of Belonging

S

**Title:** Accountability Groups

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10 minutes to set up, 5-10 minutes weekly check-ins

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** no materials are needed for this activity

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will work with three to four other students to identify individual goals, and support each other in achieving those goals.
- The learner will support their group members in and out of class, when others are struggling or needing help.
- The learner will check in with their group members on a weekly basis, revisiting goals and checking progress on achieving goals.
- The learner will exchange contact information with their group members so they can be a source of support outside of the dance classroom as well.

**Guiding Questions**

- What are your group members' names? What are some unique qualities about them?
- What are your group members' goals? What tasks must they be completing daily in order to achieve those goals?
- What will you do for your group members that will help them be held accountable for their tasks? How will you support them in achieving their goals?
- What strengths have you noticed in your groups' members this past week? What are some areas you noticed they struggled in? How could you help them in those areas of struggle?
- When you were struggling, did you reach out to your group members? Or did a group member notice and come to your assistance? How did that make you feel?
- How has your group helped you throughout this semester in dance?

**Core Activities:**

1. Teacher can either let students select their group or teacher can assign their group. Limit three to four students per group. The smaller the group, the better they are able to connect with one another and support each other in their goals.
2. Give students a few minutes to introduce themselves and exchange contact information. As a group, decide what the best form of contact is (text message,

email, Facebook group message, snapchat group message, etc.). Make sure ALL group members are in the same contact group.

3. Allow four to five minutes for students to share their goal for the semester (From Goals, Expectations, and Pet Peeves activity) and their daily tasks/ expectations to reach those goals. Students may notice that they have similar goals with some members of their group, so they can especially help each other in working towards of achieving the goals.
4. Go around and make sure each group member has their other group members goals and tasks memorized.
5. Every week (teacher can pick a day), give students four to five minutes to check-in with their group to see how things are going. See if groups are only communicating during class time or if they are also communicating outside of class.
6. Allow students to share any struggles they may be having with their group privately with the teacher.

**Areas of Focus:** Respect & Communication

RC

**Title:** Goals, Expectations & Pet Peeves<sup>3</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10-15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper and pencil, sticky notes (3 different colors), and 3 different posters

**Experience Overview:** Students do not need any movement experience for this lesson. Students should be familiar with what goals and expectations are, as well as pet peeves. Students should be able to identify the difference of goals and expectations, and be able to set personal ones of each for themselves.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will identify goals and expectations for the semester and the year.
- The learner will identify daily expectations/ tasks that they must complete in order to achieve their goals.
- The learner will recognize similar goals and expectations of classmates by sharing in a discussion and posting to a class poster board.
- The learner will use those goals and expectations to build a class social contract/ class expectation to follow each and every day.
- The learner will identify one pet peeve for themselves and share that with the class. The learner will identify how recognizing each other's pet peeves can be proactive for keeping negativity out of the classroom.
- The learner will form an accountability group of four to five peers that will exchange contact information and support each other throughout the year.
- The learner will share with their accountability group their goal and daily tasks, and determine what other things their peers can do to help them achieve their goals.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What is a goal? What is an expectation? What is the difference between the two?
- What goal do you have for yourself this semester? For this year?
- What daily expectations/ tasks must you complete every day in order get closer to achieving this goal?

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<sup>3</sup> The creation of social contracts was based off the information presented by Amy Bramlett Turner at the National Dance Education Organization National Conference in San Diego, CA.

- Why is this goal important for you to achieve? What made you want to set this goal for yourself?
- What is your biggest pet peeve?
- Do you share similar goals or expectations with any of your peers in class? What about pet peeves?
- How can it help us be successful in class by knowing each person's pet peeve?
- What did you learn about your classmates by doing this activity?
- How can you help keep your classmates accountable for their goals and daily tasks?

### **First Semester Activities:**

#### 1. Determining Goals, Expectations, and Pet Peeves

Provide each student with three different colored sticky notes and a pen/ pencil. Pick one color sticky note for each category; goal, expectation, pet peeve.

Individually, have students write each of the following on the specified sticky note:

1. One goal they have for the year in class
2. One expectation they have for their class
3. One pet peeve

When students are complete, have them place their sticky note on the matching piece of butcher paper/ poster board (prior to activity, give each piece of paper a title; Goals, Expectations, Pet Peeves).

#### 2. Analyzing and Finding Similarities in Goals, Expectations, and Pet Peeves

As the students come up and place their sticky notes on the marked posters, give them time to notice the sticky notes other students are posting. Ask students to start grouping their sticky notes when they notice similar goals, expectations, and pet peeves as their own.

Once everyone has posted their sticky notes and there are clear groupings on each poster, share with the class what similarities were discovered in goals for the class, expectations, and pet peeves.

#### 3. Determining Social Contract

After analyzing the similarities in each of the criteria, as a class determine which are most important, or which are going to make their class the most successful this year. If needed, teacher can foster discussion on some topics that may need more clarification or are too vague (i.e. be prepared for class. What does this look like?).

Use pet peeves to learn about each other and as a way to prevent potential “drama”. When students learn what annoys each other or what gets on a classmate’s nerves, they are more likely to do their best to prevent that action. Revisit pet peeves throughout the year as a reminder since it is difficult to always remember each and every student’s pet peeve.

Once complete with discussion and decisions on what the class goals and expectations are, create a large poster to be put up in the room as a daily reminder of what the class is working toward and what needs to be done to make sure they have a positive and successful working environment.

### **Second Semester Activities:**

1. Have students write down on a piece of paper one goal they want to achieve this coming semester. Students can either come up with a brand-new goal or they choose a goal that they did not achieve last semester.
2. Once they have their goal, students will need to identify two to three minutes daily expectations/ tasks that they must complete in order to achieve that goal.
3. Once set, place students in accountability groups for the semester. I suggest smaller groups of four to five students.
4. In their groups, students will go around and share their goal and daily tasks. Group members can share their ideas on other tasks their peers can do to achieve their goals. Once all students have gone around and shared their goal and tasks, have students go around to make sure they have all their group member’s goals memorized.
5. Share contact information within group and choose the best way to create a group chat with each other. Use this chat as a way to check in on each other (see “Accountability Groups” from Sense of Belonging tools).
6. On a large piece of paper, have each student write their goal with their name next to it. Post the paper up on the wall for all students to see. Provide some sort of sticker for students to place next to their goal as they achieve them.
7. Once a student achieves a goal, have them select a new goal to write up on the poster.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Write Your Name Game

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 15-20 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** no materials needed for this activity

**Experience Overview:** Students need no experience to complete this activity

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will use a body part of their choice to write out the spelling of their name.
- The learner will use voice to demonstrate and teach the spelling of their name to the class.
- The learner will demonstrate memorization of their classmate's names and perform them if they feel comfortable.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Which body part did you choose to draw/ write your name? Why?
- Which form of writing did you choose to write your name? Why?
- Which name did you feel was easiest to learn/ memorize? Why is that?
- Which name was the most difficult to learn/ memorize? Why is that?

**Core Activities:**

1. Students will need to choose a body part to use to write their name in the air. Students will also need to choose how they will right their name (all caps, lower case, block letters, cursive, etc.)
2. One at a time, students will come up to the front and share with the class their name and how they spell their name. They will then teach the class how to spell their name in the way they chose to spell it.
3. After every five students, we will go back and review all the names that have been done.
4. At the end, open the floor for students who think they can show everyone's names without any help
5. This could also be done with tap dance. Have students create a small tap phrase using the syllables in their name and then teach that to the class to build a larger phrase.
6. Reward those students with a small prize.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Build a Phrase Name Game

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 15-20 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** no materials needed for this activity

**Experience Overview:** Students need no experience to complete this activity

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will use gestural movement to represent themselves and their name, and will teach that to the rest of their group.
- The learner will demonstrate a movement with just their upper body that represents themselves and their name.
- The learner will demonstrate a movement with just their lower body that represents themselves and their name.
- The learner will memorize each person's movement to create a full phrase that will be performed for the class.
- The learner will build relationships with each other by learning names and learning something about each person.

**Guiding Questions:**

- How did you decide on your gestural movement? How did your movement represent you?
- Did you face any challenges while coming up with your movement?
- Was it easier for you to come up with a movement with your upper body or with your lower body? Why is that?
- What did you learn about your classmates by doing this activity?
- After doing this activity and knowing your classmates' names better, are you more open to start conversation with your classmate? Why or why not?

**Core Activities:**

**Upper Body:**

1. Break the class in half and have each half get into a circle on either side of the classroom.
2. Have one person start and create an upper body gestural movement that represents themselves or their name. As you do your movement, say your name at the same



time. Have the entire group repeat the movement and the name so they can memorize it.

3. Go to the second person and have them do the same thing. Once everyone has executed the second movement, go back to the first and link the two together.
4. Repeat this process as you go around the circle until you have created a full phrase.
5. Once complete, show your group phrase to the class.

**Lower Body:**

1. Break students into two new groups and have them go circle up on either side of the classroom.
2. Students will complete the same process as they did with their upper body, but now using their lower body.
3. Once complete, have each group perform their phrase to the class.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Blind Lead<sup>4</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 30-35 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Nothing needed

**Experience Overview:** No experience is needed for this activity. This is a good first day/ first week of school activity for students of all ages and levels. This activity can be done at any point in the year as well, as it builds trust and non-verbal communication among students.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will build trust with a partner by leading them around the classroom while they are blind.
- The learner will build trust with a partner by being led blindly around the classroom.
- The learner will use touch to direct their partner around the classroom, as well as leaving and approaching new partners.
- The learner will interpret touch in order to move throughout the classroom.
- The learner will commit to a movement choice when switching from leader to blind.
- The learner will differentiate between clear non-verbal communication and confusing non-verbal communication.
- The learner will reflect on themselves as a leader and determine which role they felt most comfortable executing.

**Guiding Questions:**

- When you were the leader, how did you communicate to your partner what direction you would be walking in and how fast?
- As the blind person, was it clear to you when your partner wanted to switch directions or change speed? Why or why not?
- As the leader, could you feel from your partner their willingness to walk with their eyes closed? Did you push them to do something they didn't want to do? If so, what was the reaction in their body?

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<sup>4</sup> The activities presented by Michelle Pearson at University of North Carolina Greensboro served as inspiration for the development of Blind Lead.

- As the blind person, do you feel as though your partner listened to your body language? Why or why not?
- Which role did you prefer to be? Why is that? Which role did you dislike the most? Why?
- When switching partners, did your leader clearly tell you non-verbally they were leaving you? How did you know?
- When a new person came up to you, how did they greet you? Give an explain of a calm greeting and an example of a scary greeting.
- Compared to the previous lead of the same person, how did you feel different switching partners?
- In what ways did you have to build trust with your classmates?
- Was it difficult for you to commit to a position when doing the stay, leave, or switch? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about yourself from doing these activities? What did you learn about your classmates?
- In what ways can we use non-verbal communication in the dance class?

### **Core Activities:**

#### **Part 1: Stay**

1. Break students into partners that they do not usually work with. Have partners decide who is going to be gummy bears and who is going to be cookie dough.
2. Gummy bears will be the leader first, while cookie dough will have their eyes closed.
3. Demonstrate for the students how they will hold onto their partner so that their blind partner feels the most comfortable. Stand side-by-side and have the leader place inside arm on the outside shoulder of the blind partner. Leader will then take the inside hand of their partner in their outside hand. This position will allow the leader to communicate with both hands and allow the blind partner to feel more secure being led around the room.
4. Explain and demonstrate to the students that they will not be able to talk to their partner, that this activity is done through non-verbal communication. The leader will need to use their touch to guide their partner around the room, as well as interpret their partner's comfort level with being blind. The blind partner will have to trust that their partner isn't going to lead them into something or cause them to fall/ trip.
5. After explanation, allow three to five minutes of the gummy bear partner leading the cookie dough partner around. Encourage students to experiment with speed and direction as they get more comfortable.
6. Once time is up, open eyes and have partners do a quick share. Change partners and repeat the same process for three to five minutes.
7. Use guiding questions to create discussion between partners and as a class.

### **Part 2: Leave & Switch**

1. You can either have students keep the same partner or assign them a new one. Keep the same gummy bears and cookie dough.
2. Cookie dough will begin as the leader this time. Just like before they will use the same position while walking their blind partner around the room. This time they have the choice of stopping their partner in place, by non-verbally telling them, and walking away.
3. When a student walks away, they have the choice to walk around on their own for however long they wish and then find a new blind person to lead. They must say “hello” to the partner non-verbally and then take them on a walk.
4. The blind partner will stand with their eyes closed until someone new comes to pick them up.
5. Give three to five minutes to activity and then have all students open eyes. Make sure each student is with a partner and have a quick discussion.
6. Switch roles and repeat activity for three to five minutes.
7. Use guiding questions to create discussion between partners and as a class.

### **Part 3: Stay, Leave, or Switch**

1. Again, you can either have students keep the same partner or assign them a new partner. Keep gummy bears and cookie dough as partner assignments.
2. This time allow students to decide which partner will be blind first.
3. Students will maintain the same holding position as leader.
4. As leaders are walking their blind partner around the room, they again have the choice of stopping the walking. This time, the leader can choose to continue walking and find someone new, or they can stay where they are and close their eyes to become a blind person. They also have the option of walking and then stopping to close their eyes.
5. The blind person also has a choice once they are stopped. They can stay there and wait for someone to pick them up or they can open their eyes and start walking to pick someone else up.
6. Explain to students that no matter their decision, they must commit to it 100%. If they choose to close their eyes, they must close their eyes and stay. If they open their eyes, they must walk. Getting stuck in between gives mixed messages to fellow students and we don't want to end up with two blind people leading each other.
7. Do this for five to seven minutes.
8. Come together as a class and use guiding questions to create discussion.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication

C

**Title:** Authentic Movement Partners<sup>5</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10-15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper and pencil

**Experience Overview:** Students need to be comfortable doing improvisational movement and they need to know their partner's name. Students should be familiar with moving through the different levels, as well as listening to their body and moving organically according to how their body feels that day.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will execute movement improvisation with eyes closed in order to focus more on authentic movement and moving organically with the body.
- The learner will observe their partner while moving authentically and use voice to keep partner safe from other dancers and objects in the room.
- The learner will communicate calmly and clearly to their partner when they are getting close to danger while moving authentically.
- The learner will describe to their partner how they felt while moving authentically and what types of movement qualities they felt their body doing.
- The learner will describe the movement qualities they identified while watching their partner move authentically.
- The learner will identify what tone of voice feels most comforting when speaking to their partner.

**Guiding Questions:**

- When being the mover, in what ways did your partner make you feel safe while moving with your eyes closed? If your partner did not make you feel safe, what could they have changed in order to do so?
- How would you describe your movement qualities while moving with your eyes closed?
- While observing, what movement qualities did you identify in your partner's movement?

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<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Rankin completed a residency at Kofa High School in Yuma, AZ where she introduced authentic movement, inspiring the creation of this activity.

- How did HOW your partner moved prove as a reflection to how safe they felt with you as their partner?
- How does tone of voice effect how we react to verbal cues?

**Core Activities:**

1. Pair students up by using playing cards. Pass cards out to students as they walk into the classroom and they must find their matching card. This person is their partner.
2. Students need to ensure that they know each other's names and now how to pronounce them correctly. One student will need to be the mover first and the other is the observer. The mover will place themselves somewhere in the open space of the room, not near any other people or objects. The observer will place themselves along the wall, near their partner.
3. Movers can begin in any position they wish. For three minutes, the mover will move with their eyes closed. They are to keep their eyes closed and move however they feel comfortable on that given day. The observer is to be the eyes for their partner. When they feel their partner is getting too close to someone or something, they are to calmly and clearly say their name. Be sure that the partner is calm when saying the name. In addition to keeping their partner safe, the observer will also objectively write down what they see their partner doing.
4. When time is up, the mover will answer questions provided by the teacher before going to talk to their partner.
5. Movers will then find their partner and use guiding questions to form discussion.
6. Switch roles and repeat the same process
7. As an experiment, you can have one partner use a calm voice when saying their partner's name and the other partner can use a scared voice. Allow the students to identify which felt safer and comforting while moving with their eyes closed, and why that is.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication & Respect

CR

**Title:** Types of Touch<sup>6</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10-15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** no materials are needed for this activity

**Experience Overview:** For this activity, students should be familiar with their partner and open to communicate with them. This is a starting activity to get students familiar with different kinds of touch on another person's body, respecting other's bodies, and becoming comfortable coming in contact with others in various ways.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will explore touch on their partner using various pressures and durations.
- The learner will explore touch on a partner using parts of their body that are not just their hands and fingers.
- The learner will communicate to their partner whether something does not feel good or if they feel uncomfortable.
- The learner will use feedback from their partner to guide what types of touch they demonstrate on their partner's body, and where they touch on their partner's body.
- The learner will identify their comfort level with touching and being touched, and will communicate that to their partner through discussion.

**Guiding Questions**

- Where do you feel most comfortable being touched? (swim suit lines)
- What is your comfort level with touching others? Four being that you are absolutely okay with it and one being that you hate touching others.
- What is your comfort level with being touched? Four being you are absolutely okay with being touched and one being that you hate being touched.
- How can our touch change on our partner by experimenting with pressure and duration?
- How does the change of touch feel on your partner? Ask your partner what they are feeling.

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<sup>6</sup> Types of Touch was created based off techniques presented within my undergraduate modern classes at Hope College, as well as Stephanie Rankin's residency at Kofa High School in October 2016.

- Besides just our hands, what other body parts can we use to come in contact with our partner? Which feels more natural or comfortable to you? Which feels best on your partner?
- What did you learn about your partner as you explored touch on them? How much pressure could you give them? What types of touch did they like the most? What did they like the least?

**Core Activities:**

1. Teacher places students into partners. One partner will lay prone on the ground while the other partner sits next to them.
2. Allow the partner laying prone time to share what swim suit they have on and where they feel comfortable being touched.
3. The partner sitting next them will first be exploring touch on their partner outside the swim suit lines using just their hands. Encourage students to explore different pressures as well as duration. As sitting partner conducts touch on their partner, they should be asking their prone partner how they are feeling. Prone partner will communicate what feels good and what does not feel good.
4. Next have students explore other forms of touch and contact, not using their hands. Guide them through using their shoulder, back, bottom, feet, head, etc. Each student will pick their comfort level, while also continuing to make sure their prone partner is comfortable. Once again, have them explore pressure and duration with these different forms of touch.
5. Log Roll: to show students that we are strong humans and not breakable, have the sitting person lay their stomach across the lower back/ arch of their prone partner. They should not be holding themselves up, but giving their partner their full weight. Once again, the prone partner will communicate if something hurts.
6. The partner laying across, will slowly roll towards their partner's shoulders, keeping their full weight on them. Again, the prone partner will communicate if something hurts or they are uncomfortable. **DO NOT ROLL PAST THE SHOULDERS.**
7. Top partner will then roll back to the lower back, and then down the backs of the legs. **DO NOT ROLL OVER THE KNEES.**
8. Repeat this roll a few times before lifting yourself off partner.
9. Switch partner and repeat.
10. Discuss the experience with your partner.



**Areas of Focus:** Communication & Respect

CR

**Title:** Fireflies/ Claymakers

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 15-20 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Non-lyric music is optional

**Experience Overview:** For this activity, students must be familiar with movement and introduced to improvisation. Students must be familiar with appropriate touch and learning to be comfortable with touch.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will demonstrate different types of touch on a partner to determine different reactions through movement.
- The learner will understand safe and appropriate touch with their partner, and will communicate with their partner what feels comfortable.
- The learner will explore various types of touch using hands and other body parts.
- The learner will communicate non-verbally with their partner to create movement.
- The learner will react to the touch of their partner through movement.
- The learner will interpret the touch of their partner by executing movement that feels appropriate to the type of touch.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What is your comfort level with touch? Are you open to any kind of appropriate touch or does touch make you uncomfortable?
- Were you able to openly communicate to your partner what type of touch was most comfortable for you? Why or why not?
- What is your comfort level with touching other people? Are you open to touching others appropriately or do you prefer not to touch anyone?
- When using touch on your partner, which forms of touch seemed to be most clear to your partner? Why?
- What challenges did you face while demonstrating touch on your partner? How did you overcome those challenges?
- When being the one being touched, were you able to clearly interpret the touch your partner was demonstrating on you through movement?
- Was your partner's touch clear or not? Why?
- What challenges did you face while interpreting touch from your partner? How did you overcome those challenges?

- Which role did you prefer to be? The one demonstrating touch or the one being touched? Why?
- Do you feel communication through touch is important in dance class? Why or why not?
- How can we use touch in other ways throughout dance class?

**Core Activities:**

1. Break students into partners, preferably people they do not usually work with.
2. Have students choose which person is chocolate ice cream and who is vanilla ice cream.
3. Next have students communicate to their partner where they want to be touched. For this I use “bathing suit lines”. Students can say they are wearing a bikini, tankini, one-piece, wet suit, etc. Make sure each student shares their comfort level with being touched.
4. Starting with fireflies, have the chocolate partner close their eyes. The vanilla partner is going to use just the tip of their finger (like a firefly light) to touch outside the desired bathing suit lines. They are going to experiment with different strengths of touch, as well as duration. The chocolate partner will then have to react to the touch in whatever way they feel is appropriate.
5. Do this for about two to four minutes and then switch partners. Repeat the same Firefly process on the opposite partner.
6. After two to four minutes, vanilla partner opens eyes and uses guiding questions to have a short discussion amongst partners.
7. Moving into Claymakers, the process will be the same but the touch will change. Still stay outside the bathing suit lines, but now students will experience with touch using entire hand or even other parts of the body. They can experiment with putting pressure into their touch or using both hands to communicate movement to their partner. Students can experiment with getting their partner up and down from the ground.
8. Do this for about three to five minutes per partner.
9. Open eyes and use guiding questions to have a full class discussion about the activity.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication & Sense of Belonging

CS

**Title:** Comment Box

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 10 minutes to set up, 5-10 minutes weekly check-ins

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Closed box, small note cards or pieces of paper, pencils

**Instructional Strategies:** The comment box is an anonymous way for students to ask questions, provide comments and suggestions, or even give warm fuzzies to students they feel have been helping them in class. The box is a way for students to say or ask the things they may feel comfortable doing in person. Students can use this to get to know their teacher better by asking personal questions. Students can also use it to provide suggestions for activities or request for certain activities in class. Throughout the week, students are able to place notes in the box. On Thursday night the teacher will go through the notes, and on Friday take a few minutes to answer questions or respond to comments.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will have the opportunity to ask questions, write comments and suggestions, or give warm fuzzies anonymously.
- The learner will find comfort in knowing that their teacher listens to their questions and concerns.
- The learner will feel valued and supported by their teacher when she answers questions, responds to comments, and follows through with class requests.

**Core Activities:**

1. Create a box that has an opening at the top for small notes to fit inside. Also make sure the box can be opened to retrieve the notes at the end of the week.
2. Place the box in a easy to access place in the classroom throughout the entire week. Keep small pieces of paper and pencils by the box.
3. On Thursday night remove papers from the box and read through.
4. On Friday, take five to ten minutes at the beginning of class responding to questions, comments, and suggestions, or sharing warm fuzzies with students.

**Areas of Focus:** Sense of Belonging

S

**Title:** What Motivates You?<sup>7</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 20-30 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper, pencil, plain white printer paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will identify two to three things or people that motivate them to push harder each day and work to succeed.
- The learner will explain why those two to three things or people motivate them and identify the WHY behind their work each day.
- The learner will share with their group what motivates them and why, as well as the WHY behind their actions.
- The learner will create a poster showcasing their motivators, their why, and their goals to be posted as a daily reminder of what they are working towards.
- The learner will share to the class group page a picture of where they posted their poster and why they put it where they did.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What are two to three things or people that motivate you to succeed?
- Why do these things motivate you? What is it about them that push you to work hard each day?
- What is your WHY? Why do you get up each day? Why do you come to school each day? Why do you have to achieve your goals?
- Does your why relate to any of the goals that you set?
- How can your WHY help you achieve the goal you have set in dance class?
- Where can you post your poster that you will see it every single day?
- How will seeing this every day be a reminder that you are strong and can push yourself to succeed?

**Core Activities:**

1. Individually, ask students to write down two to three things that motivate them to succeed. This can be people, goals, grades, etc. This also does not have to be

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<sup>7</sup> The information presented in Fogarty's book, *Unlocking student talent: The new science of developing expertise*, suggests that students need support finding what motivates them in order to have meaning behind their actions. From Fogarty's research, came the creation of "What Motivates You?"

dance related. Their motivators can be things outside of the dance classroom, but overall push them to try their best every day.

2. Once students have listed their motivators, below that have them explain why those things motivate them. Use guiding questions to help students dig deep into identifying the WHY behind their motivators.
3. Have students get together in their accountability groups and take about one to two minutes per person to share their motivators, why they are their motivators, and what is their why.
4. Give each student a blank piece of paper and allow them to choose as many colored pencils as they wish.
5. Allow five to ten minutes for students to make a small poster representing their motivators and their WHY. This is for students to post in a place that they will see it every day. Students can also take a picture of it and post as their phone background (whatever works for them).
6. As homework, students are to take a picture of where they have posted their poster, and share to the classroom page. This way the whole class is holding each other accountable for posting their motivators.

**Areas of Focus:** Communication & Respect

CR

**Title:** Blind Claymakers

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 15-20 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Non-lyric music is optional

**Experience Overview:** Students should have completed “Types of Touch,” “Blind Lead,” and “Fireflies/ Claymakers” activities. Students should know and understand touch, as well as what it is like to lead someone non-verbally around the room while they are blind.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will demonstrate different types of touch on a partner to determine different reactions through movement.
- The learner will understand safe and appropriate touch with their partner, and will communicate with their partner what feels comfortable.
- The learner will explore various types of touch using hands and other body parts.
- The learner will communicate non-verbally with their partner to create movement.
- The learner will react to the touch of their partner through movement.
- The learner will interpret the touch of their partner, by executing movement that feels appropriate to the type of touch.
- The learner will build trust with a partner by leading them around the classroom while they are blind.
- The learner will build trust with a partner by being led blindly around the classroom.
- The learner will use touch to direct their partner around the classroom, as well as leaving and approaching new partners.
- The learner will interpret touch in order to move throughout the classroom.
- The learner will commit to a movement choice when switching from leader to blind.
- The learner will differentiate between clear non-verbal communication and confusing non-verbal communication.

**Guiding Questions:**

- How was this different than when you just walked your partner around the room with their eyes closed?
- As a leader, what new challenges did you face while moving new people throughout the space? How did you overcome those challenges?
- As a blind person, what new challenges did you face when having a new leader multiple times? How did you overcome those challenges?
- How did you implement the new forms of touch that we did earlier to this activity?
- What is your comfort level with being touched now?
- What is your comfort level with touching others now?

**Core Activities:**

1. Break students into partners, preferably people they do not usually work with.
2. Review rules from “Blind Lead- Switch” and “Claymakers.”
3. For this activity students will be moving their blind partner around the room, but they do not have to just walk. Students are to use touch from “Claymakers” to move their partner through the space. They may choose to move them through general space or keep them in their personal space.
4. Students are also allowed to put their partner in a shape and leave them to go find another partner.
5. Use this activity as a starting block for contact improvisation work
6. Switch roles and repeat the process
7. Use guiding questions to guide discussion amongst partners once complete

**Areas of Focus:** Sense of Belonging & Respect

SR

**Title:** “I am...”<sup>8</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 20-30 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper, pencil, instrumental music (if desired)

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will carry out a timed write, based on the prompt, “I am...”
- The learner will identify three words that stand out to them or are important in describing who they are as a person.
- The learner will share with their peers’ qualities that make them, them.
- The learner will identify qualities that are similar amongst their peers and determine the most important.
- The learner will create movement as a class based on 5-8 words selected by the class.
- The learner will perform the phrase created as a class using their personal connection to each of the movements.
- The learner will observe and recall their own personal words to say during various parts of the phrase being performed.
- The learner will discuss challenges they faced while performing, as well as when saying their words, and will identify how they overcame those challenges.
- The learner will identify what they learned about their peers in doing this activity.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What are three words you wrote on your paper that stood out to you or are most important to you?
- What things did you hear your peers share that stood out to you?
- Did you notice any similarities in what your peers were sharing? What types of similarities?
- How can we use these words to create movement and tell a story about us?
- Identify what it felt like to be moving the words. Were any of the words we used yours? How did it feel to move something that was personal to you?
- What did it feel like to perform the phrase in front of your peers? What challenges did you face? How did you overcome those challenges?

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<sup>8</sup> “I am...” was created by Michelle Pearson and adapted to fit within the context of this toolbox of activities, with a focus on a sense of belonging and respect within the dance classroom.



- What did it feel like to read words aloud while your peers were moving? Did you feel a connection to the words and the movement at the times you said them?
- What did we learn about each other in this exercise?

**Core Activities:**

1. On a piece of paper, students will write the prompt, “I am...” at the top. This will be a timed write and students are to keep writing until the time is up. Students do not need to write in full paragraphs or sentences; they are welcome to just use bullet notes.
2. Set the timer for one minute and thirty seconds, and tell students to begin. If students need guidance, before the timer starts give them examples of what they could say (I am a daughter, a teacher, a king, a dog lover, from Michigan, etc.).
3. When the timer goes off, students must put their pencils down.
4. Ask students to read through the words that they wrote and circle THREE that stand out most to them or are most important to them.
5. In one big circle, students will go around and share the top three things that they circled on their paper. If a student would like to read their entire list they can, but it is not mandatory. Students can choose what they are most comfortable doing.
6. As students share, write down common themes you hear students saying.
7. At the end, give students a chance to call out some things that stood out to them as their classmates share their “I am...” stories.
8. Choose five to eight things that stood out to either the teacher or the students, and use those to create a short “I am...” phrase.
9. The teacher will guide the movement. Start with the first thing and create a short abstract movement to represent that thing. Continue doing the same for each until you have a full phrase.
10. Break students into groups of three. Have one student stand at center, while the other two sit along the mirror. The students that are sitting have their personal “I am...” paper with them. While their partner is performing the phrase, the sitting partners read their three words at moments they feel are most powerful. Students are to read them loud and proud.
11. Teacher may play instrumental music if they believe that will help students
12. Rotate so each student has a chance to perform and read.
13. End with group discussion using guiding questions.

**Areas of Focus:** Sense of Belonging

S

**Title:** Photo Collage<sup>9</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 2 days; first day 5 minutes, second day 15 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** students bring pictures (5-10) that represent them and where they come from. Pictures will not be cut or ruined in anyway

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will present five to ten photos that are important to them or represent their life.
- The learner will observe their peer's photos and identify any similarities between each other.
- The learner will ask questions of their peers and teacher, about photos that sparked their curiosity.
- The learner will be open to share the story behind their photos with their classmates, and trust that their peers will respect their story.
- The learner will use this activity to become closer and more open to their peers and teacher, and will use it as a way to understand where each person comes from.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Were there any pictures that stood out to you? Why did it stand out to you?
- Did any pictures pose a question in your mind? Which picture and what is your question?
- Did you find any similarities between you and any of your classmates/ teacher? What were they?
- Did anything surprise you as you looked at your classmate's/ teacher's pictures? What made it a surprise?

**Core Activities:**

1. On the first day, introduce the activity to the students. As the teacher, bring in photos that represent you and stick them up on the mirror or wall. Allow students to take a few minutes to view the photos as if they are in a gallery.
2. Once done, allow students to ask questions about specific photos and share which ones were their favorites. Let students use this time to get to know you better.

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<sup>9</sup> "Photo Collage," was created by Michelle Pearson and adapted to fit within the context of this toolbox of activities, focusing on developing a sense of belonging with the dance classroom.

3. Assign for homework for students to do the same. Students will need to bring in five to ten photos that are special to them and that represent who they are. Pictures will not be cut or ruined in anyway, in case their parents are worried.
4. On the second day, in the student's attendance spots have them spread out their pictures.
5. Allow five to ten minutes for students to walk around the room, as if in an art gallery, and view their peer's photos.
6. Have students return to their spots and repeat the same process as when the teacher presented pictures. Allow students the opportunity to ask each other about photos they saw or mention ones that stood out to them. Some students may discover similar events or things about each other. Use this time as a time of bonding for students.

**Areas of Focus:** Sense of Belonging & Respect

SR

**Title:** “I come from...”<sup>10</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 20-30 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper, pencil, instrumental music (if desired)

**Experience Overview:** Students should have completed “I am...” activity and be familiar with coming up with interpretive movement based on words or things. Student should be comfortable coming up with their own movement and building a phrase with a small group of peers, without the help of the teacher. Students have completed several activities that have allowed them to be comfortable sharing personal things about themselves with others.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will identify where they come from using a quick write.
- The learner will identify things that make them individual and different from everyone else in the class.
- The learner will develop respect for where each other comes from and have understanding for each other’s personal lives.
- The learner will determine movement that best interprets or represents the words they are wanting to present.
- The learner will create abstract movement representing words of where they come from.
- The learner will build a phrase with a group using individual movement based on personal stories.
- The learner will perform their phrase to the class and partake in the building of a short class choreography.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Where do you come from?
- What words are more important to you or do you believe truly describe who you are as a person?
- How can you create movement based on the words you selected from your personal story?

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<sup>10</sup> “I come from...” was created by Michelle Pearson and adapted to fit within the context of this toolbox of activities, focusing on developing a sense of belonging and respect with the dance classroom.

- What challenges did you face while coming up with movement? How did you overcome these challenges?
- Did you recognize any similarities in your group member's stories? If so, did you notice any similarities in your choice of movement?
- What challenges did you face when combining all your group member's movements to create a longer phrase? How did you overcome this challenge?
- What did you learn about yourself and your peers while doing this activity?

### **Core Activities:**

1. On a piece of paper, students will write the prompt, "I come from..." at the top. This will be a timed write and students are to keep writing until the time is up. Students do not need to write in full paragraphs or sentences; they are welcome to just use bullet notes.
2. Set the timer for one minute and thirty seconds, and tell students to begin. If students need guidance, before the timer starts give them examples of what they could say (I come from green grass, snow, street hockey, court picnics, drives to Chicago, etc.).
3. When the timer goes off, students must put their pencils down.
4. Ask students to read through the words that they wrote and circle THREE that stand out most to them or are most important to them.
5. Place students in small groups of three to five people. In their small group, they will first read all that they wrote down with no explanation. Even if their peers are confused or curious, they do not have to share why they wrote something down. After each student has shared all their entire write, have them share the three words that were most important to them.
6. As a group, discuss common themes you may hear (if any).
7. Using the three words the student selected, give them three to five minutes to come up with short movements to represent their words. They are to try to complete this individually, as it is their personal story, but may ask group members if they are stuck.
8. Once each student has their three movements, have groups join back together and teach their movements. Just like in "I am..." they are to build their movements together to create a phrase. Groups may choose how they wish to combine movements. They can do all three of one person then all three of the next, or rotate and do one of each and then go back around. Allow ten minutes for groups to complete their phrase.
9. Once complete, have three to four groups present their phrases at the same time. No need to explain movement, they just perform it.
10. Have group members number off and do performance groups. One group member will perform their phrase with one person from each group. Teachers may use music or silence. Other group members will read words from their paper or their group list while their partner is performing.

11. As the teacher, you can take this opportunity to try various choreographic techniques (add-on, pathways, etc.). By the end you can have a short piece to present and interpret.

**Areas of Focus:** Respect

R

**Title:** Character Trait Phrase Building<sup>11</sup>

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 2 days, 45 minutes each

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper, pencil

**Experience Overview:** Students have become familiar with improvisation through the execution of various guided activities. Students have had the opportunities to choreograph dances both on their own and with groups. Students are familiar with the elements of dance and can apply them to movement and phrases

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will identify three qualities that describe their personality.
- The learner will determine three objects or people that physically represent the three qualities they have used to describe themselves.
- The learner will describe each of the three objects or people they have chosen as physical representations of their qualities.
- The learner will use the descriptive words they have listed to help them explore movement for a solo phrase.
- The learner will create a solo phrase based on the three qualities they chose to describe themselves and perform them for a small group of peers in the class.
- The learner will build a phrase with two to three peers using the movements in each person's solos.
- The learner will apply elements of dance to add dimension and variety to their group phrase.
- The learner will interpret qualities chosen based on the movements they observe, and learners will explain their reasoning behind their interpretations.

**Guiding Questions:**

- How does your movement relate to the words you used to describe yourself?
- What challenges did you face while creating the movement for your solo phrase? How did you overcome those challenges?

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<sup>11</sup> "Character Trait Phrase Building," was presented by Betsy Ward-Hutchinson at University of North Carolina Greensboro, and adapted for this toolbox of activities to focus on building respect within the dance classroom.

- How did it feel to perform a personal solo in front of a larger group? If it was difficult, what made it the most difficult? If it was easy, what made it easy for you to perform?
- What decisions did you have to make when combining your solos into a duet/ trio with other peers in class?
- What challenges did you face while working with your peers and building a longer phrase? How did you overcome those challenges?
- Did you feel as though you were able to openly communicate to your peers your opinions and ideas? Why or why not?
- When watching other's phrases, was it clear to see what qualities they were representing? Why or why not? What could they have changed in order to make their movements clearer?
- Were your interpretations of your peer's movement accurate with their quality?

**Core Activities:**

1. On the student's piece of paper, give them one to two minutes to write down three words that they would use to describe themselves. Encourage them to write down the first three qualities that come to mind.
2. Once each student has their three qualities, have them write down an actual object or person that they think of when they hear each word (loyal-dog, happy- clown).
3. Now that they have a specific object or person that relates to each of their words, give students five minutes to make a short list of physical descriptive qualities for each. When using descriptive qualities, we want to think of our six senses. What do we see? What would we feel? How does it taste? Does it make a sound?
4. Using the descriptive words for each quality, create a short gestural/ abstract movement. This movement should not look like the original word you came up with. Rather than being literal with our movement, we want to explore how we can represent it in an abstract way.
5. Give students five to eight minutes to come up with three different movements based on their three different qualities.
6. Once students finish coming up with their three movements, give them three to five minutes to link them together. Students will need to find smooth transitions from one movement to the next.
7. Break the students into groups of five to six, still spread out around the room. Allow each group a chance to present their solo phrase along with others doing the same.
8. Place students in either duets or trios, and have them present their solos one at a time for their peers. After all students have shown their solo, groups will build a longer phrase using all their solos.
9. Give students 10-15 minutes to build their duet/ trio. Students can choose how they want to put their solos together. They can either do all of one person's, then all of someone else's, or they can alternate and mash them together.
10. Encourage students to include the elements of dance in their phrases to add variety to their movement.



11. When time is up, have one to two groups present their group phrase at a time so their peers can observe.
12. Take one person from each group and make new groups. In the new groups, give students ten minutes to show the phrase they created with their other group. After each student performs, the rest of the group members will share what qualities they interpret from the movement. Peers can identify what they see and explain what is causing them to come to that conclusion.
13. End with group discussion using guiding questions.

**Areas of Focus:** Respect

R

**Title:** Types of Learners

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 25-35 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Website (<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml>), laptop/ netbook/ phone, paper, pencil, poster paper, markers

**Experience Overview:** No prior knowledge is needed for this activity. This activity is a starting block for understanding your own learning style, as well as understanding and respecting other's learning styles. Through understanding, students can begin to form more respect and patience with their peers in class.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will discover what type of learner they are and identify qualities of that type of learner that relate to themselves.
- The learner will identify strategies specific to their learning style that will allow them to be successful in all of their classes.
- The learner will discover other peers within dance class that have the same learning style as them, and discuss how they can support one another to be successful in class.
- The learner will understand the various learning styles and how each person learns differently, and develop more respect for how each person learns within the class.
- The learner will apply what they learned about themselves as learners to other classes to become more successful.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What type of learner are you? What qualities of that learner do you see in yourself? What strategies can help you as a learner?
- When you got together with your similar learners, what similarities did you observe amongst yourselves?
- How can you support your peers who are the same learners as you?
- When hearing about the other learning styles, did you notice any qualities that you felt you were as well? What were they? Why do you believe that?
- What are the similarities and differences of the learners within your accountability group?

- How can you support your peers who are different learners than yourself?
- What did we learn about each other and the various learners in this class? How can that help us in how we interact and collaborate with each other?
- Do you have more respect for your classmates now after understanding that we all learn differently? How so?
- How can you take what you learned about yourself as a learner and apply it to all your other classes?
- How could you communicate to your teachers what type of learner you are and how you learn best?

### **Core Activities:**

1. Students will need an electronic device and will need to access the following website, <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml>. Once they arrive at the site, they will need to click on the button that says, “Answer the 20 Questions”. Give students about eight to ten minutes to complete the quiz and get their learner results.
2. When they reach the final page with their results, have students write down what type of learner they are, five characteristics of that type of learner that they see in themselves, and three to five strategies that are helpful to them as that type of learner.
3. After all students have finished their quiz and writing down their results on their piece of paper, have students separate into groups based on their learning style.
4. Provide each group with a poster paper and colorful markers.
5. Assign one person in the group to be the scribe. The scribe will write the type of learner the group is in the middle of the poster.
6. Go around the circle and have each person share qualities of that type of learner that they see in themselves. The scribe will write down each quality and if one is repeated, they will put a star next to it. Put as many stars as times that the quality is said.
7. Next, have each student share one strategy that was listed that they feel would help them being their specific type of learner. The scribe will again write them on the poster and star ones that are repeated.
8. Select one to two people from the group that want to share their poster with the class. Allow each group to stand up and share about their type of learner and strategies that help them.
9. Individually, after the sharing of posters, have students reflect on what they learned about the different learners. Did they see some of themselves in other types as well? Which types? Use guiding questions for reflection then discussion in accountability groups.

**Areas of Focus:** Respect & Communication

RC

**Title:** How to Build a Critique

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 30 minutes

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, pencil/ pen, netbooks/ electronic device, Canvas, YouTube, (listed below), headphones, timer, ball/ object for discussion passing, worksheet

- "JT and Marko performance on Bollywood song @ So you think you can dance"
- "Maddie Ziegler Critiques and has some fun at Rehearsals SYTYCD: The Next Generation."
- "The moment Julianne Hough critiques Mark Ballas on DWTS."

**Experience Overview:** Students have learned about the elements of dance (time, space, and energy) and how to choreograph a dance. Students have choreographed at least one dance in a group, and have experienced applying the elements to choreography. Students have performed in several shows/ community performances, and have either provided or been given feedback from a classmate or the teacher. The students have experienced feedback that is applicable and non-applicable. Students have built relationships and bonds with fellow classmates in order to trust the feedback that will be provided to them.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will watch and identify words used by judges in videos from “So you think you can dance?” and “Dancing with the Stars”.
- The learner will determine which words/ feedback are constructive to the dancers and which are empty.
- The learner will determine which quality of feedback they prefer as a growing dancer.
- The learner will provide new responses for the judges that provided empty feedback to their dancers.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What words/ phrases do you hear the judges telling the dancers/ choreographers? List all.
- Are these words/ phrases giving the dancers/ choreographers feedback that will make them stronger as a dancer/ choreographer? Why or why not?
- Is the feedback you hear something that can be applied to the dancer/ dance? Why or why not?

- How could these critiques be re-worded to benefit the dancer/ choreographer?
- What do you want to hear when you are given feedback?
- How can we build a constructive critique that will help a dancer/ choreographer?

**Core Activities:**

1. Put students in to pair or small groups (three to four). Make sure at least one student in the group has a working phone or netbook.
2. To make this lesson easier, create an assignment or module on the online program your school uses.
3. When students access the online assignment, they will find there are three different videos to watch. Students will use their worksheet to following along with the assignment.
4. In their group, students will watch the first two videos and write down the descriptive words the judges say to the dancers. Students do not need to write in sentences, they can just jot down words.
5. Once all groups have watched the first two videos, re-group and discuss what was heard. Use guiding questions to help create discussion.
6. After discussion, have students watch the third video and write down what they hear.
7. In their group, students will discuss the differences between the first two videos and the last video.
8. Re-group and have a class discussion about what is constructive feedback and what is empty feedback. Which do they prefer?

**Areas of Focus:** Respect & Communication

RC

**Title:** Writing a Critique

**Grade Level Target:** 9-12th grade, 14-18 years old, High School students

**Activity Length:** 1-hour class

**Space Needed:** Large empty room

**Materials and Resources:** paper, pencil, short technique combination, video, and music

**Experience Overview:** Students are familiar with and have learned how to build a constructive critique. They have analyzed videos that have exemplified positive constructive feedback, as well as generalized feedback. They have identified which form of feedback is more beneficial to the dancer and choreographer, and have applied what they learned to writing a critique about a professional dance on Youtube.

**Instructional Objectives:**

- The learner will learn, rehearse, and perform a combination taught by the teacher focusing on familiar technical steps performed to a song.
- The learner will observe and identify areas of strength in their partner's dancing and provide positive constructive feedback.
- The learner will observe and identify areas of weakness in their partner's dancing and provide positive constructive feedback.
- The learner will communicate feedback in a respectful manner and will accept feedback in a respectful manner.
- The learner will apply the feedback provided from their partner to grow their dancing and make areas of weaknesses stronger.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What areas could your partner work on to become a stronger dancer? What evidence do you have for those areas that need growth?
- What areas did they do really well in when performing? How could you tell?
- What words and phrases did your partners use when providing your feedback? Were you able to take the feedback and immediately apply it to your dancing? Why or why not?
- Was it difficult coming up with feedback for your partner? Why?
- When considering word choice, did you have difficulty deciding which words to use when providing feedback that would be respectful to your partner? Why?
- When receiving feedback, how do we show that we respect and value our partner's feedback? Why is this important?
- How can you apply this method to other areas of dance class?

**Core Activities:**

1. Students will be taught a short combination that is the style of the teacher's choice. This combination should have technique in it that students are familiar with and understand how to execute. They may not be perfect at all steps yet, but they know how they should be executed.
2. After teaching the phrase, allow some time for students to practice on their own or with their peers, and play music for them to practice with. Bring the entire class together to rehearse and ask any questions for clarification or confusion.
3. Break students into groups of three and have them number off in their group.
4. Person #1 will perform the combination first. As they perform the combination, the other two partners will be sitting and observing. While they observe, they will work together to write down constructive feedback for their partner. Allow Person #1 to perform the combination two times so that the other partners can see the entire dance.
5. Person #1 will then go to their partners who will provide them with constructive feedback in a positive way. Working on communicating respectfully and building feedback that the dancer can take away to become better.
6. Repeat this process until each person in the group has performed and been provided feedback.
7. Give students three to five minutes to individually work on the feedback provided by their partners, before having all students perform the dance again.
8. At the end, have a class discussion sharing examples of feedback they got from their partners and how it was implementing that feedback into their dancing.
9. Use this activity for a variety of technique lessons in class, as well as when learning choreography for show.

APPENDIX C

**Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric**

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student forms and initiates conversation with 100% of peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>• Student uses positive language 100% of the time when speaking.</li> <li>• Student engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group on a daily basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student forms and initiates conversation with majority of peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>• Student uses positive language majority of the time when speaking.</li> <li>• Student engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student rarely forms or initiates conversation with peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>• Student rarely uses positive language when speaking.</li> <li>• Student rarely engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student never forms or initiates conversation with peers without prompting by the teacher.</li> <li>• Student never uses positive language when speaking.</li> <li>• Student never engages in conversation with peers outside their friend group.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student always listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>• Student is aware of tone of voice &amp; body language 100% of the time.</li> <li>• Student is patient with various learners in the class.</li> <li>• Student accepts others opinions and is open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking majority of the time.</li> <li>• Student is aware of tone of voice &amp; body language majority of the time.</li> <li>• Student shows patience for various learners majority of the time.</li> <li>• Student accepts other's opinions and is open to other's ideas majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student rarely listens &amp; does not talk when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>• Student is rarely aware of tone of voice &amp; body language.</li> <li>• Student rarely shows patience for various learners.</li> <li>• Student rarely accepts other's opinions and is rarely open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student never listens &amp; is always talking when peers or teacher is talking.</li> <li>• Student is not aware of tone of voice &amp; body language.</li> <li>• Student never shows patience for various learners.</li> <li>• Student never accepts other's opinions and is never open to other's ideas.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Sense of Belonging</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student visibly shows excitement for class when they walk in the door.</li> <li>• Student shows the same level of comfort with all students within the class, as well as the teacher.</li> <li>• Student seeks the support of their peers or teacher for help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student shows excitement for class majority of the time.</li> <li>• Student shows the same level of comfort with 80% of peers within the class.</li> <li>• Majority of the time, student shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>• Student seeks support from peers or teacher majority of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student rarely shows excitement for class.</li> <li>• Student shows the same level of comfort with 60% of peers within the class.</li> <li>• Student rarely shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>• Student rarely seeks support from peers or teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student never shows excitement for class.</li> <li>• Student shows the same level of comfort with 40% of peers within the class.</li> <li>• Student never shows comfort with the teacher.</li> <li>• Student never seeks support from peers or teacher.</li> </ul>
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## Positive Social Relationships: Assessment Rubric (Individual Student)

	<b>January 18, 2019</b>	<b>February 1, 2019</b>	<b>February 14, 2019</b>	<b>February 22, 2019</b>
<b>Communication</b>				
<b>Respect</b>				
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>				