Title: Introduction to Ballet

Standards Addressed

Historical and Cultural Context
Understanding the Historical and Cultural Dimensions of Dance
3.0 The students will analyze the function and development of dance in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to dance and dancers.

Aesthetic Valuing
Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Dance
4.4 The students will list the expectations the audience has for a performer and vice versa.

Time: 30 minutes

Floor Plan: A regular classroom setting, where the students sit at their desks, with space at the front of the classroom.

Materials Needed:
• A copy of the black line of timeline dates cut into cards
• Two copies of the black line of events (one cut up into cards)
• A copy of “Do’s and Don’t” cut into strips
• A video of a ballet performance (optional)

Purpose:
The purpose of this lesson is to teach the students that dance has a rich history that includes ballet. Understanding some of the history of dance and movement will help give the students a greater appreciation of what they are watching. In addition, in order to enjoy a performance of dance, the students will be taught appropriate audience behavior.

Background:
It is assumed that students have a very limited idea of what ballet is, as well as the history of dance. Also, it is assumed that many students are unfamiliar with the proper etiquette required at a live performance, as many students’ exposure to plays, movies, etc. comes from either the television or movie theater. For all students to be able to enjoy a live performance, the rules of etiquette need to be explained.

Key Questions:
Where did dance come from?
What kind of dance is ballet?
Where did ballet come from?
Why does the audience need to follow certain rules during a live performance?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Steps of the Lesson</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thoughts for the Teacher</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1 Set up purpose/goals</strong></td>
<td>How are you making your purpose clear to the students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask the students if they can guess where dance came from.</td>
<td>Write student responses on the board.</td>
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<td>Ask the students to tell you how old they think dance is.</td>
<td>Validate responses, as they are just guessing at this time.</td>
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<td><strong>2 Engage students</strong></td>
<td>How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson?</td>
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<td>Ask the students to tell you all of the dances that they can think of and list them on the board. Ask the students, “Why do you think people dance?”</td>
<td>Add your own ideas if the students cannot think of many types of dances.</td>
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<td><strong>3 Learning Sequence</strong></td>
<td>What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present?</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Discuss where dance came from and why people dance.</td>
<td>Understanding where dance comes from and how ballet developed. This gives the students a better appreciation of what they are watching. Also, in order to enjoy a performance, the students need to understand audience etiquette.</td>
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<td>b) Explain the history of ballet.</td>
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<td>c) Explain audience etiquette for alive performance of dance.</td>
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<td><strong>4 Assessment</strong></td>
<td>How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice)</td>
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<td>Students will reflect on their learning of the history of dance and ballet, and will demonstrate an understanding of proper audience etiquette through role-playing.</td>
<td>Assessment embedded within lesson.</td>
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<td>Can the students recall proper audience etiquette? Can the students respond to the video using appropriate dance vocabulary?</td>
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**Actual Lesson Sequence**

1. Ask the students if they can tell you where they think dance came from. Give 5-6 volunteers a chance to answer. Write appropriate answers on the board.
2. Ask the students if they can tell you how old they think dance might be. Give 5-6 volunteers a chance to answer. Write appropriate answers on the board.
3. Ask the students if they can tell you why people dance. Give 5-6 volunteers a chance to answer. List all of the reasons given by the students for why people dance.
4. Take the timeline dates from the already copied and cut black line and give one card to each student. Have the students with the timeline dates come up to the front of the room and get in order from 1600-1946.
5. Hand out the event cards, one to a student, and instruct the students that while they hear you talk about the event on their card, they are to bring it up and stand by the correct timeline card. As you read the black line of each event, the students will come up.
6. Once all of the events have been read, go over each one very quickly, explaining that they have just made a timeline of the history of ballet.
7. Thank all of the students who participated, collect their cards, and let them return to their seats.
8. Ask volunteers to summarize or retell 3-4 major events that happened in ballet history.
9. Ask if any of the students have gone to a live show of some sort (i.e., play, dance show, recital, school play, talent show, etc.). If someone has, ask him/her to share with the class what were some of the things they could do at the live show. If no one in class has been to a live show, ask the students if they have been to an assembly at school. Then ask them to tell you the rules for assembly behavior.

10. Hand out the Don’t cards to different students.

11. Have each of the students with Don’t cards come up to the front of the room and act out what is on the card. Have the rest of the students guess what the Don’t behavior is. Continue until all of the cards have been acted out. Repeat the process for the Do’s as well.

12. Once the students have returned to their seats, ask the students to raise their hands and tell the class one Do or one Don’t for proper audience behavior.

13. (Optional) Explain that they just learned those behaviors because even though they are not going to see a live performance, they are going to practice by watching a video of a live ballet. The students are to pretend they are a live audience and are to follow proper etiquette for watching a performance.

14. Turn on the video for about 10-15 minutes, or however much time you feel is appropriate, and make sure the students are following proper audience etiquette.

Closure:
Ask the students to review proper etiquette and why it is important.
Ask the students what part of the video they liked the best and why.

Other Considerations:
➢ The lesson can be done over a period of two days doing the timeline one day and the audience etiquette with the video the next day.
➢ Special Needs: Adjust the lesson according to the student’s abilities.

Extensions:
Write a paragraph about their favorite part of the video that they watched and give details as to why they liked it.
1600  Ballet began in France and was done by men only.

1661  First dance school established.

1681  First Female dancer (Mademoiselle de Lafontaine).

1740  Russian ballet school established.

1821  Dancing on point began and women dancers became prominent.

1832  First full ballet performed (La Sylphide).

1892  Tchaikovsky creates The Nutcracker.

1909  Russian ballet surpasses French ballet.

1934  George Balanchine comes from the Ballets Russes and establishes a ballet company in America.

1946  Balanchine is responsible for the extremely slim dancer’s body and ballet becomes popular in America.
DO be on time.

DO applaud when ballet is over.

DO know something about the performance before going.

DON’T take any flash photography.

DON’T talk during the ballet

DON’T bring a cell phone or a pager.

DON’T eat or drink inside the theater.