



## ***DANCE EDUCATION ON THE MOVE***

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This is the fourth edition of a new initiative for Dance/New Jersey. Dance Education on the Move is a bimonthly e-blast that includes information about dance education resources, lesson ideas, student comments, fun quotes and information from the field. As a Dance/NJ member, you are invited to submit information for the e-blast. Enjoy this issue.

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### ***Get in the Dance: Strategies for Motivating Reluctant Dancers***

Have you heard students say, I am not a dancer, I have two left feet, dance is not my thing, or I do not want to dance? These comments are made frequently by students who may not have had a positive experience with dance or do not view it as a "cool" activity. The students may or may not have chosen your class and are concerned about being embarrassed, failing at learning and making a mistake especially in front of their peers. Motivating students to participate or take the first step to try can be very challenging. As an educator, you know need to be proactive and have a several plans for how you will approach each student. There may be a different reason behind each student's reluctance. Take time to talk with the student about why they feel negative about participating in dance. Acknowledge the student's concerns and feelings and then work out a plan for involvement. Here are some strategies for addressing the concerns of the reluctant student:

- Place the student in a group that will be positive and supportive.
- Ask the student to try one part of the class and set aside time at the end of the class for the student to talk with you about the lesson.
- Provide honest praise and encouragement frequently during the class.
- Present dances that are age appropriate yet students can easily gain success.
- Use music that students find relevant, interesting and appropriate for the dance style.
- Pair a reluctant student with a peer who is willing to help the student learn the steps and sequences.
- Develop a contract that provides for participation and a reward. "If you participate in three dance classes then you can run the CD player for one of the classes."
- Conduct a class discussion about the fear of trying new activities and how others have worked through their fear of failure or motivated themselves to participate.
- Establish a classroom environment that allows students to make mistakes and helps them to succeed.
- Do not embarrass a student or coerce them into participation. This intimidation tactic will only increase the student's reluctance.

What other ideas have you used to encourage reluctant students to participate in a dance class? Send your ideas to me for inclusion in a future newsletter

## Fun Quotes About Dance and Beyond

"Gotta Dance" Gene Kelly, choreographer and dancer.

The following quote is from Evans, B (2006). *Reminiscences of a dancing man: A Photographic journey of a life in dance.* "I believe that every child in our culture has the right to know his/her body from the inside out in the profound ways that a lifelong study of dance has given me. I am enormously saddened by the low priority that the body and its ways of learning and knowing are given in many of our public and private educational institutions. What is ultimately more important for any of us than the harmonious relationship of the mind and body? How can our society not value and insist upon the kind of whole person education discoverable through dance for every child in our culture? How can we in good conscience withhold such vital opportunities for fullness of being? (p. 110)"

The following quote is from, Jonas, G (1992) *Dancing: The pleasure, power, and art of movement*. "The impulse to move is the raw material that cultures shape into evocative sequences of physical activity that we call dance. This phenomenon is universal. Courting and courtly dances; wedding dances and funeral dances; dances of healing and dances of instruction; dances to arouse, amuse, or uplift onlookers; dances to usher in the seasons and dances that appeal directly to the gods; dances that tell stories and dances that seek to create a formal beauty that cannot be put into words; There is no end to the variety of purposes to which the dancing body can be put. But meaning as well as beauty is in the eye of the beholder; and one person's shudder of religious ecstasy may be another person's shimmy of sexual abandon. So intensely personal is dance, so closely linked to cultural identity, that when people disagree about the meaning and value of specific dances, the resulting confusion may breed contempt, anger, even violence. To question or belittle other people's dances is to challenge their right to be themselves." (p 12)

## Resources:

### Featured Dance Education Books

**Stinson, S. (1988). Dance for young children: Finding the magic in movement.  
Reston, VA: National Dance Association/American Alliance for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.**

Presents content and processes for teaching dance to young children. The author provides specific examples of experiences that teachers beginning to teach dance can use easily. The book includes an excellent appendix citing children's literature that can be a resource for developing lessons.

**Willis, C. (2004). Dance education tips from the trenches. Champaign, IL:  
Human Kinetics.**

This essential survival guide prepares teachers to handle class management, class organization, logistics, motivation, gender issues and other challenges encounter by dance educators. The author describes the problems educators may encounter, offers several ideas for solutions as well as stories designed to inform the reader about real-life experiences in dance education.

**Zakkai, J. (1997). Dance as a way of knowing. New York: Stenhouse Publishers.**

This book presents information on the content of dance, what is to be taught, and practical ideas for including dance in the general classroom. The author emphasized involving students in creative problem-solving and learning through discovery instead of imitation.

## **Music Resource**

One of my favorite CD's that I have used for a variety of dances is titled *Future Primitive (1974)* by EKO. The CD has 10 selections that use acoustic and electric guitars, mandolins, drums, a keyboard, harmonica, sax and harmonica. The music is lively, spirited, soothing and strongly rhythmic. I have used selections for dances about fire, water, wind, the sun and earth in addition to accompaniment for locomotor combinations and warm-up sequences.

The music of EKO comes from the creative mind of John O'Connor. The composer/guitarist put out five albums under the EKO name -- which means "one" in Sanskrit -- through new age label Higher Octave, beginning with *Future Primitive* in 1974. The album was well received and landed a slot among Billboard's Top Ten on the new age charts. Following the release of *Celtica* in 1996, O'Connor became a composer for *King of the Hill*, Fox's award-winning cartoon series.

EKO has four other CD's and you can check out more information at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

**If you have music resources please send them to me for future newsletters**

## **Students Speak**

This section is for students to contribute comments, poems or reflections on dance and their experiences as a performer, student or choreographer. Ask you students if they have a favorite dance company, dance video/DVD or movie about dance. Send responses to me and I will be happy to include them. This section is a great vehicle to include student's voices at the elementary, middle, high school level or students in college or university courses. Thanks