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**Instructional Practices Institute**

**Fall 2016**

**Element 4: Reflection**

*Teacher reflection:*

The original dance relay was a great way for the 8th graders to break the ice and feel like they can dance and be goofy with their peers. It gives them a common sill experience to draw from. In addition, it is essential to include ice breakers because this establishes confidence and a safe classroom environment for students to take risks. Something I think helped during the warm-up was using the “Dance Bank” visual. The students were able to pull from their background information with having common dances (e.g. YMCA, Chicken Dance, etc.). It was a great scaffolding visual that helped spark inspiration. The visual of our “Dance Bank” allowed the student to focus on listening to the music to get their rhythm.

It is important to be flexible as you are facilitating these learning/experimental experiences. This particular learning experience organically grew into more than a one day lesson with students wanting more time to finish their group dances.

We were also able to have students select their own music, upon approval of the teacher, to use as their group’s own dance. This is an option for classes to do if the resources are available. This creates a huge buy in to making a rhythmic dance. They are familiar and comfortable with the music making rhythmic patterns the focus.

A twist I might use in the future is having students pick a theme throughout their dance as a guide. That way they use the manipulative as a part of the theme and not just focus on the manipulative. The manipulative became the focus and it wasn’t as creative.

It never ceases to amaze me how 8th grade students are hesitant at first to do a creative movement or dance unit. After we continued with the unit, it became one of the favored units for the students.

*Participant reflections:*

* **What did you learn today?:**

Students had a turn and talk before groups shared out on what they had learned for the day. One group shared out about how they had to collaborate and work together to figure out their transitions when we combined our routines together. Another group shared that they learned through the process of their dance creation, that they needed to simplify their dance into 4 count moves and that repetition was a good thing like a chorus of a song.

* **What do you believe the teacher could have done differently to help you learn this objective easier?**

Some of the feedback I received from the students included more demonstration or examples from the teacher. Another piece students spoke to was giving the opportunity to form larger groups so they could do more with transitions and formations.

* **If you could do this “assignment” over, what would you do differently?**
  + **I wonder what would've made this easier or more difficult?**

I had mixed reviews as far as the music selection. Some of the students liked how they could choose their own music for the freedom and creativity. However, other students didn’t like how the music was inconsistent. They would have preferred a few options but had it limited to help them focus on the dance task at hand.