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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

DISCOVERING COUNTRIES AND THEIR CULTURES
THROUGH MOVEMENT: FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS
DEVELOPING AWARENESS AND EMPATHY
TOWARD EACH OTHER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Of Masters of Arts

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College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance
Dance Education

December 2018

This Thesis by: Rebecca S. Epstein

Entitled: *Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement: Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each Other*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the College of Performing and Visual Arts, School of Theatre Arts and Dance, Program of Dance Education

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ABSTRACT

Epstein, Rebecca S. *Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement: Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each Other*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2018.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and answer the following essential questions: 1) What are students' responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content? 2) What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different cultures and countries from around the world? 3) Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and country?

One goal of the study was to help students become more empathetic toward one another through movement. There were twenty-four participants in this study. Learning about each other's countries and cultures through movement had a very positive outcome. The participants discovered things about their peers that they had not previously known prior to this study. For example, the participants learned about each other's cultures, such as their traditions, foods, sports, and dances. Through creativity, communication and collaboration, the participants in this study developed an increased sense of awareness and empathy toward each other.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Study

Dance is a powerful form of communication, and throughout time, has always been a way that people of all cultures and experience communicate what is meaningful to them. The researcher found an article in an online educational resource called Teaching Tolerance. In this article titled “Common Beliefs,” the number one statement was “I don’t think of my students in terms of their race or ethnicity. I am color blind when it comes to my teaching” (1). In the same article, it was later stated that,

When race and ethnicity are ignored, teachers miss opportunities to help students connect with what is being taught. Recognizing that a student’s race and ethnicity influences their learning allows teachers to be responsive to individual differences.... An individuals’ race and ethnicity are central to her or his sense of self but they are not the whole of personal identity. Moreover, how important an individual’s race and ethnicity is to their identity will vary and teachers need to take that into account as they seek to learn more about their students. (1)

Students need to do the same toward one another—they must be fair and treat one another with respect while also respecting each other’s cultures. Students can show empathy toward their classmates and their racial and ethnic identities in various ways, both verbally and nonverbally. Dance and movement are a form of nonverbal communication. A famous modern dancer once said, “dance is the hidden language of the soul of the body” (Graham). Dance can help students communicate with one another nonverbally about their countries of origin.

The intent of this study was to explore the varied ways movement and dance can be used to help students show empathy toward one another in a meaningful way even though they come from different cultures and countries. This study was motivated by the researcher's personal experience with students in a fifth-grade classroom who came from various countries around the world and did not seem to show empathy toward other students from different cultures. Louise Derman-Sparks noted,

Quality educational programs use children's greater cognitive abilities to understand their self and group identities, while also fostering children's empathy for people across differences and their critical thinking and acting skills for countering prejudice and discrimination. It is important to teach about people in their and each others' communities who work to end prejudice and discrimination. All aspects of curriculum make visible the contributions of all racial/cultural groups. (3)

It is important to give students opportunities to teach their peers about themselves and where they come from. "Teachers don't need to come from their students' cultures to be able to teach them [the students this information], but empathy and cultural knowledge are essential" (Jensen 18). Using the arts, specifically, dance, is a wonderful way for students to express themselves freely and talk about themselves through movement. Rob Horowitz, the associate director of the Center for Arts Education Research at Columbia University's Teachers College said, "[Dance] is incredibly effective in terms of social-emotional development and in terms of being able to incorporate kids from different backgrounds, different ethnicities, different social backgrounds and have them do something common" (Yap 4).

Dance is a unique form of communication. It is a special kind of human communication in which we speak the same language although no words are exchanged. "Second language learners [English Language Learners] can understand the meaning of

words through movement.... Second language learners who are not yet speaking and writing in English will appreciate movement as a way to learn and demonstrate what they know” (Zakkai 13).

Purpose of Study

Kinesthetic empathy is the ability to experience empathy merely by observing the movements of another person. In the book titled *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, by Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds, the authors indicated, “the term ‘*Einführung*,’ translated into English as ‘empathy’ by Edward Titchener in 1909” (Reason and Reynolds 19). In their book, Reason and Reynolds quoted Robert Vischer and Theodor Lipps. In 1872, Robert Vischer “first used the term [empathy] in its modern sense of projecting oneself into the object of contemplation” (qtd. in Reason and Reynolds 19). Later, Theodor Lipps

Promoted [empathy] in his writings on aesthetic experiences...empathy can also concern relationship to objects rather than exclusively intersubjective relationships with other people. In Vischer’s and Lipps’ writings on aesthetics, kinesthetic sensation was considered an intrinsic path of empathy. (qtd. Reason and Reynolds 19)

John Martin, *New York Times* dance critic from the 1930s, cited Lipps and used the terms ‘inner mimicry’ and ‘kinesthetic empathy’ to refer to spectators’ muscular and emotional responses to watching dancers. He argued “inner mimicry of dance movement had a physiological dimension, involving movement memory, anticipation and associated changes in physiological states” (Reason and Reynolds 19). Controversially, he also proposed that inner mimicry of a dancer’s movement allowed spectators direct access to dancers’ feelings: “it is the dancer’s whole function to lead us into imitating his actions

with our faculty for inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feelings” (Reason and Reynolds 19).

In their book titled, *Thinking with the Dancing Brain: Embodying Neuroscience*, authors Rima Faber and Sandra Minton stated, “When a person observes something, their brain resonates with reciprocal impulses or patterns that mirror the incoming stimuli. The result is an internal neurological duplication of the external experience called empathy” (Faber and Minton 23). Empathy was an important aspect of this study because both the teachers and students had to show empathy toward one another for the study to be successful.

Learning dance technique or choreography requires replicating demonstrated movements—an activity that relies on accurate empathy and precise operation of the mirror neuron system. Sensitivity to the emotional motivation for actions can help students refine their performance. Since dance is mainly learned through replication of observed movement, a positive emotional environment is paramount. (Faber and Minton 72)

When dancers perform, there is a sense of reciprocal empathy. There is a heightened awareness of how both the performers and audience members are feeling. The purpose of this study was to see if the students involved could experience reciprocal empathy toward each other’s performances when dancing about their cultures.

Many of the participants in the researcher’s study are students living in poverty. It is up to teachers to be knowledgeable about their students’ backgrounds and cultures—not only where they come from, but their socioeconomic background as well. Students living in poverty are faced daily with challenges that affluent children will never have to confront. In his book titled, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*, Jensen wrote,

Recent evidence suggests that the complex web of social relationships students experience—with peers, adults in the school, and family members—exerts a much greater influence on their behavior than researchers had previously assumed. This process starts with students' core relationships with parents or primary caregivers in their lives, which form a personality that is either secure and attached or insecure and unattached. Securely attached children typically behave better in school. Once students are in school, the dual factors of socialization and social status contribute significantly to behavior. (Jensen 21)

Providing students with positive social interactions with their peers in the classroom is one way that teachers can help students living in poverty be successful in school. Giving students opportunities to share with their classmates about themselves and about their cultures can help build positive social connections. Children ages eight to twelve respond well to respect, fair treatment, and understanding.

It is the right of every person to feel comfortable with his or her body, to be able to express feelings through movement, and to develop kinesthetic intelligence to the fullest. Creative dance, taught sequentially, comprehensively, and in a noncompetitive environment, will provide opportunities for all participants to extend knowledge, develop creativity and be healthy. (Gilbert 8)

The researcher became interested in this topic because of her involvement in a non-profit organization called Life Vest Inside. Every year on World Kindness Day, Life Vest Inside leads a worldwide flash mob dance event called Dance for Kindness (DFK). The DFK website described this event in the following way,

In 2012, Life Vest Inside initiated Dance For Kindness, a WorldWide event in celebration of World Kindness Day. Groups from across the globe join together to perform a Kindness Freezemob/Flashmob to the same song, same dance, all happening on the same day.... The purpose of Dance for Kindness is to look beyond ourselves – beyond the boundaries of our country, beyond our culture, our race, our religion and realize that we are citizens of the world and that kindness is the common thread that unites us all. Last years' event took place in over 100 cities, 50 countries with over 12,000 participants and more than 134 million media impressions.

The main idea behind DFK is that it doesn't matter where you come from or what you believe, everyone can agree that kindness helps make the world a better place, and

through dance we can spread kindness. On World Kindness Day, the researcher led the DFK event at her elementary school with over five hundred participants in grades three through five.

The researcher hoped that bullying was going to go out of style, but now with social media, cyberbullying has begun a rebirth of bullying practices. October is National Bullying Prevention month, and the researcher taught a unit with her fifth-grade students about bullying, cyberbullying, and kindness. The purpose of this study was to see if dance could help students learn how to show kinesthetic empathy toward one another. By giving students a chance to talk about where they come from with their classmates, and use various art forms like drawing and dance to share more about their cultures, hopefully, they would be kinder to one another.

Movement is a form of authentic communication. “It is because we are unique that movement and dance works so well with children. Children can express their feelings, ideas, and points of view in individual ways and at their own level of ability and experience” (Zakkai 18). Whether they are putting poems into motion, exploring a motif through movement, or creating a dance about their cultures, students can attain a greater understanding as they use movements to learn about one another.

The essential questions addressed in this study are:

- Q1 What are students’ responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content?
- Q2 What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different cultures and countries from around the world?
- Q3 Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and country?

Creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking are all 21st century skills. Dance encourages higher level thinking skills by engaging students in exploration, creative problem solving and decision-making. “Movement and dance encourage students to explore a variety of solutions to a movement problem. Once they realize there is not just one right answer, but a range of more and less effective choices, students are inspired to take greater risks and invest themselves more deeply as learners” (Zakkai 15). Movement and dance provide students with opportunities to collaborate with one another in the classroom. “While movement and dance experiences emphasize individual expression, students are also constantly working with each other, either as fellow movers or collaborators” (Zakkai 16). The purpose of this study was also for students to collaborate and communicate to create movements and weave those movements together to form a dance based on content from both of their cultures.

To do this, students had to be empathetic toward one another while trying new ideas and ways to create their dances. They also needed to look at problems in a new way while sharing their thoughts, questions, ideas, and solutions with one another. This study challenged students to be use their 21st century skills effectively.

Significance of Study

This study was important because it could hopefully teach children the importance of being accepting of other cultures.

Shared movement and kinesthetic empathy are tools we can use to better understand those in our communities we may have a harder time understanding, either due to language barriers or differences in ability. The best part is that you already have the tools. It’s not just the metaphor of art and dance as pleasurable aesthetic things that reconcile, rather it is the attention that it takes to listen, to attune to our physical bodies and the memory, knowledge, and potential that they

carry within them. Because the truth is we often don't see the repercussions of our actions. (Duong)

Another significant goal of this study was to use movement and dance to teach students how to be effective creative and critical thinkers, collaborators, and communicators. These skills are 21st century skills that all students should have. Movement and dance are a wonderful way to help students learn these skills because movement is a universal language.

In his book, Michael Michalko describes what takes place in the mind when people engage in creative thinking. Using Einstein as an example, Michalko says that the famous scientist thought in images rather than words. Michalko continues that by thinking in images, people are able to remember details more easily. According to Michalko, creative problem solving is also facilitated by using images because creative individuals can visualize and see parts of the solution beforehand. (Minton 77)

Dance imagery is a tool that was used in this study to help students develop their movement skills. Images help students to find the right body feeling needed for each movement and can enable students to get inside the movement. Using dance imagery is a tool students can use to make connections and increase body awareness. "In the framework for transforming concepts into movement, there is a feeling response to the inspiration or concept first, followed by tapping into the imagination, memories, and past experiences" (Minton 77). This process was mirrored in this study because students first wrote poems about their cultural background, drew a visual motif to go along with their poem, and then created a movement phrase about their country of origin. The final component involved each student collaborating with a partner to create a movement sequence using details about both of their countries and cultures.

Students learn in different ways. Some students are visual learners, some are auditory learners, and some are tactile-kinesthetic learners. This study provided students

who are all types of learner's opportunities to learn in various ways. Visual learning means that students are getting information by seeing it through images, pictures, or drawings. Auditory learning means that students relate to content by hearing it orally. Tactile-kinesthetic learning means that students learn by doing hands-on work or moving their bodies. When students create their own artwork, poems and dances, they feel a sense of ownership in their work. These various ways of learning are strengthened by the arts. "Movement can make learning efficient. The brain is most stimulated by and attracted to change. The use of movement as a teaching strategy is a novelty for students that engages the brain and captures student attention" (Faber and Minton 16).

Howard Gardner proposed a new concept of intelligence in 1983 called a Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). "He proposed first seven, and then an eighth, intelligence: linguistic, musical, mathematical-logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intra-personal, interpersonal, and natural. Given the demands of dance on the body/mind, dance develops each of them (Faber and Minton 11).

Bodily-Kinesthetic, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal intelligences are associated with this study because the students involved were using their bodies to express aspects about their cultures. Intrapersonal intelligence is also deeply connected to this study since it is directly related to communicative and social abilities.

Dance is a social art form involving ensemble cooperation, coordination, and sometimes collaboration. It requires great skill and awareness working with colleagues, choreographers, and audience populations. Dancers often teach for financial sustenance, which requires sensitivity and insight into students' needs. (Faber and Minton 12)

In this study, Intrapersonal intelligence was incorporated when students used dance to collaborate and communicate with one another about their cultures. "Together

with more traditional ways of receiving, recording and reflecting knowledge, students can also use their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence to learn and show what they know about different topics, concepts and processes through movement” (Zakkai 11). The premise was that all the different types of intelligence could be developed through this study because movement and dance effects both the body and the mind.

Though there were successes throughout this study, there were also a few limitations for the study. These included potential research bias since the researcher was also the dance teacher, small sample size, and a lack of validity for the research instruments. Further research needs to be completed when the researcher is not also the dance teacher. These limitations will be discussed further in the Conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

What Is Cultural Empathy Versus Kinesthetic Empathy?

Empathy can have many meanings, but usually refers to putting yourself in someone else's shoes to gain a sense of what they are experiencing. Cultural empathy refers to a person's ability to accept another person's point of view, background, ethnicity or culture. "[Dance] is incredibly effective in terms of social-emotional development and in terms of being able to incorporate kids from different backgrounds, different ethnicities, different social backgrounds and have them do something common" (Yap 4).

Kinesthetic empathy refers to a person's ability to experience empathy toward another person through watching their movements. Aida Amoako, a freelance writer for *The Atlantic*, reviewed Donald Glover's (also known as Childish Gambino) viral video of "This is America." Amoako stated that,

Though the word *viral* is so associated with internet-sharing now, the virus-like quality of dance was being analyzed long before the existence of social media. John Martin, one of the first prominent dance critics, described the medium's effect on its audience as a contagion. (Amoako)

In Martin's book from 1939 titled *Introduction to the Dance*, he suggested that,

When we watch others dance, we shall cease to be mere spectators and become participants in the movement that is presented to us, and though to all outward appearances we shall be sitting quietly in our chairs, we shall nevertheless be dancing synthetically with all our musculature. (qtd. in Amoako)

Modern dance theorists such as Susan Leigh Foster and Ivar Hagendoorn studied mirror neurons and how kinesthetic empathy is what makes dance feel alive in one's body and when viewing a performance. Kinesthetic empathy also allows one to internally simulate the movement. Amoako later mentioned Susan Leigh Foster,

...in her [Susan Leigh Foster] paper and performed lecture *Kinesthetic Empathies and the Politics of Compassion*, outlines [John] Martin's idea that the internal mimicry of movement extends to emotion, which gives dance the ability to transcend class, cultural, and racial barriers. (Amoako)

The researcher also found that when watching the "This is America" video, it was very difficult to not feel kinesthetic empathy toward the actors/dancers in the video.

While this was an extreme example of how a dance performance can evoke an emotional, empathetic response from the viewer, it did endorse the concept that kinesthetic empathy is a shared commonality.

In this study, students were asked to use their original poetry, artwork motifs, and choreography to collaborate with a partner for their final performance. Working in pairs or trios, students had to work cooperatively to choreograph a dance sequence that effectively incorporated aspects of both of their countries and their cultures through movement. Their task was to teach the audience something new about themselves through movement. Whatever they shared in the dance sequence had to be something that demonstrated a difference and similarity from aspects of the countries or culture of their partner or partners.

The process of collaborating and creating can be a valuable learning experience for both the students choreographing as well as the students who observed their performance as audience members. The goal for the performers was to try and evoke kinesthetic empathy from the audience members. "Through participating in these

experiences, students learn to respect diverse perspectives, use different ways to resolve problems, and develop empathy” (MacBean 117).

Dance Is a Form of Non-Verbal Communication

The common idiom “a picture is worth a thousand words” refers to the notion that a single image can convey a complex idea more effectively than a description does. The same is true with dance or movement. Dance can transcend the current environment and send audience members to a different place, memory or feeling. In her article Judith Hanna stated,

Dance is a form of stylized movement that bears some similarities to verbal language (including sign language). Both dance and verbal language have vocabulary (loco-motion and gestures in dance) and grammar (rules in different languages and dance traditions for putting the vocabulary together and, in dance traditions, justifying how one movement can follow another). And both dance and verbal language have semantics (meaning). Verbal language strings together sequences of words, and dance strings together sequences of movement. However, dance more often resembles poetry, with its multiple, symbolic, and elusive meanings, than it resembles prose. (Hanna 493)

Movement comes naturally to children; it is how they express themselves. When words fail, movement can help children communicate. For example, gestures are commonly used as a form of non-verbal communication. Hanna later mentioned,

The body gives clues. It “talks” and people “listen.” Human beings first learn through movement, and movement facilitates learning. Sensory–motor activities form new neural pathways and synaptic connections throughout life, and the merger of body, emotion, and cognition leads to effective communication, the medium of education and dance. Moreover, human beings alone among species have art experiences without obvious evolutionary payoff because fictional thinking engages innate “play” brain modules that allow us to consider hypothetical situations so that we can form plans in advance of difficulties. (Hanna 493)

Dance can sometimes help children say things with their bodies that they would otherwise have a difficult time saying with words, especially for Second Language Learners.

Benefits for Second Language Learners

Dance is a form of non-verbal communication that can benefit Second Language Learners (also known as English Language Learners) because it can help them understand the meaning of words through movement. A movement lesson is a perfect opportunity to build such students' basic vocabulary. "In one of his books, [Eric] Jensen said that the kinesthetic arts, which include dance, can play a powerful role in representing the world symbolically because they are a universal language" (Minton 75).

A dance language may help teach a verbal language. Teachers at the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education explored how the principles of a flamenco dance (shifts in rhythm, speed, and phrasing, in addition to the interplay of rules and inventions in some ways similar to the intonation, transition, gestures, and facial expressions of verbal language) could help build the confidence of students learning to speak English as a second language. (Hanna 494)

Some of the students who participated in the study are Second Language Learners, however, they were still able to participate fully in the study since movement is a universal language. Movement was also a way for the participants to communicate with each other and choreograph together. Hanna described the relationship between the brain and movement,

Areas in the brain that control the hands and gesture overlap and develop together with the areas that control the mouth and speech. The Broca and Wernicke areas, located in the left hemi-sphere, have been associated with verbal language expression and comprehension, abstract symbolic and analytic functions, sequential information processing, and complex patterns of movement. The process of making a dance engages some of the same components in the brain for conceptualization, creativity, and memory as do verbal poetry or prose, but not the same procedural knowledge. . . . Dance is also linked to the right hemisphere,

which seems to involve elementary perceptual tasks, nonverbal processing of spatial information, music, and emotional reactivity. (Hanna 494)

Appealing to All Types of Learners

As noted in the first chapter there are many different types of learners. Usually, the types of learners are described as visual, auditory, or tactile-kinesthetic.

Research shows that active learning is more effective than traditional teaching methods in providing understanding, learning problem solving, stimulating curiosity and independence, and creating positive feelings about school. Active learning also assumes different children learn in different ways. One way to actively learn is to learn by moving and dancing. (Minton 1)

In this study, active learning was used to attempt to meet the needs of different types of learners. Based on the curriculum used the students read, drew, talked, shared, and moved.

In the pre-interviews and post-interviews, the researcher spoke with each of the participants and communicated with them via auditory learning. Throughout the study, each participant also had a chance to interview their partner(s) and share with them as another way of communicating through auditory learning. The participants also had to use auditory learning when practicing their choreography for their final performance, because they had to make sure they were on the same beat of a rhythm and performed together.

In a study to investigate the neural mechanisms underlying how rhythm is learned, electroencephalographic (EEG) data was recorded during a rhythm-reproducing task in which participants were asked to memorize an auditory stimulus and reproduce it via tapping. The results showed,

. . . that brain networks among the frontal, temporal, and cerebellar cortices are involved in rhythm learning. We used a repeated auditory-motor rhythm-reproducing task and compared EEG data from early and late learning stages in

and between individuals who were able to learn the rhythms and those who could not. EEG analyses showed that frontal error prediction-related activity and beta oscillatory activity among extended brain regions play an important role in facilitating learning to produce rhythms. (Edagawa and Kawasaki 7)

Fleming and Mills developed the VARK model, which classified students as four types of learners: Visual, Auditory, Read, and Kinesthetic. These authors also noted that VARK learning styles associated with memory also influence emotional intelligence. In their study performed in an elementary school in Indonesia, the VARK model was used to understand and describe the frequency and use of different sensory modalities. These researchers learned kinesthetic learning had the most significant effect on the emotional intelligence compared to the auditory and read/write learning styles. The read/write learning style is for students who prefer to gather information displayed as words. The results of the study also indicated that body and hand movements can be used to develop emotional intelligence.

The research results of Boone and Cunningham from 1998 proved that

A five-year-old child was able to decode the information related to the emotions expressed by the dancers' movement. Thus, dance is a form of emotional expression, which requires teamwork, a good adaption from one movement to the other movements, and can develop social relationship harmony. (Leasa, et al. 87)

While moving, various sensory structures in the body are activated when kinesthetic learners express their emotions. Thus, their confidence increases, and social relationships become stronger. Other researchers found,

Physical activity enlarges the opportunities for someone to investigate his environment, expand his emotional knowledge, and develop his physical and emotional skills. Thus, the sensory experience expressed through physical activities will strengthen the emotional experience that leads to the development of emotional intelligence. (Leasa, et al. 87)

In the current study, each participant also tapped into their visual learning when they drew their own visual motif representing an aspect about their country/culture. All directions and tasks were always printed via handouts or posted on the whiteboard to meet the needs of all visual learners. Viewing artwork (in this study, viewing the visual motifs), was a transformative process that insisted on the development of consciousness and communicative tools. Cathy Smilan wrote an article for the Arts Education Policy Review where she stated,

When we embrace the representations and values of others, we gain insight into their identity; deciphering symbol systems is requisite to knowledge in any discipline or community. In order to understand all of our students, we must overcome feelings of sympathy and empathy (Chalmers, 2002) to learn the significant symbols, rituals, and metaphors of other cultures represented in our classrooms. By so doing, we can help students to reflect, organize ideas, and interpret imagery to communicate their own stories as well as to appreciate the nuanced stories of others. (Smilan 223)

After completing their visual motifs, each student shared their visual art with their partners through a 'read aloud.' In Smilan's article, she referred to a 'read aloud' during which students shared their artwork by providing narratives to explain their illustrations. She later indicated,

Read aloud provides each student with the opportunity to share her voice and story and to teach her colleagues about experiences and perspectives that may be unknown to the class. In expanding aesthetic and cultural awareness, students learn to read visual and textual cues, to reinterpret visual culture and gain deeper broaden their worldview. (Smilan 225)

In this study each participant used the choreographic process to create their own movements. These movements were inspired by their poems and artwork motifs and allowed the students to delve into their kinesthetic learning. In addition, students were also using their repetitive movements to perform additional motor skills. Each participant had to create their own movement sequence inspired by their poem, and then create a

separate movement sequence inspired by their artwork motif. Finally, each participant had to collaborate with his/her partner(s) to create a movement sequence that demonstrated similarities and differences between their countries. Participants used repetition of movements that they had previously choreographed for their final movement sequence.

The cerebellum, which is activated when kinesthetic learners are doing physical activities, is used to manage and store information physiologically.

According to Leiner (2010), the cerebellum is also known to be involved in mental exercise of motor tasks, which can improve the performance and make someone become more skillful. The cerebellum is connected to the area of the brain that not only focuses on motor activity but also focuses on the mental and the sensory tasks and can automate the motor activity as well as mental and sensory skills of humans. Thus, at the same time, kinesthetic learners not only perform motor skills but also perform the other skills automatically. (Leasa, et al. 88)

The final performance with their partner(s) was another aspect of kinesthetic learning in this study. For this performance, the participants collaborated to choreograph a dance sequence that represented the similarities and differences between each students' countries and cultures.

Movement and dance help students focus and engage in learning, apply their kinesthetic intelligence, understand concepts and themes, develop and refine their higher level thinking skills, communicate in unique ways and appreciate the artistic expression of others, develop spatial awareness, cooperate and collaborate with each other. (Zakkai 10)

Monica Frichtel conducted a study to explore student experiences when they participated in a school-based dance outreach program at an urban elementary school. Her findings suggested that students practiced skills and developed content knowledge which aligned with essential skills necessary for success in the 21st century in Partnership

with 21st Century Learning [P21]. In the article, Frichtel discussed her findings about a dance curriculum in relation to the Framework for 21st Century Learning. She wrote,

Participants in this study engage in a shared dance curriculum, experience community, face challenges, collaborate, assume responsibility, create and express ideas, and experience dance as a practice that influences their well-being. In P21 language, students demonstrate through experiential descriptions of collaborative experiences that they are developing skills to work creatively with others; communicate clearly; collaborate with others; adapt to varied roles and responsibilities; deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism; interact effectively with others; work effectively in diverse teams; participate actively; present oneself professionally and with proper etiquette; collaborate and cooperate effectively with teams; guide and lead others; and be responsible to others... Furthermore, these experiences relate to educational subjects, themes, and skills recognized as critical to 21st-century learning by P21. (Frichtel 50)

Integrating the Multiple Intelligences

Many of Howard Gardner's theories from the Multiple Intelligences (MI) were also addressed in this study. Specifically, the bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligences are connected to this study because the students were using their bodies to express aspects about their countries and cultures. When the participants were collaborating, communicating, and creating together, they were addressing their interpersonal intelligence as well, while their intrapersonal enabled them to tap into their own feelings. "We now know that active, interdisciplinary, and multisensory teaching approaches use a greater number of human intelligences, promote better retention, and inspire an inner desire to learn" (Minton 2).

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can also be used as a cognitive tool to harness the psychomotor energies of children with ADHD. Authors Andy Anderson and Rebecca Rumsey, from the University of Toronto, researched examples of kinesthetic learning in the classroom to demonstrate the practical application of MI theory because they felt there are many similar characteristics between the bodily-kinesthetic learner and the child

with ADHD. For example, long lectures that involve seat work and quiet reading time are very difficult for both types of children. Instead, focusing on the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence optimizes opportunities for such children and puts their energy to good use.

The authors explained the reasons for these characteristics in the following way,

Rief (1993) explains when we concentrate, our brain releases extra neurotransmitters (NTs), which enables us to focus on one thing and block out competing stimuli. People with ADHD seem to have a shortage of these neurotransmitters. Given that the mind and body are interconnected, this deficit in the brain may be counteracted by body movements, which stimulate the release of NTs such as dopamine (Leith, 1998). According to Greenberg and Horn (1991), hyperactivity is really the body's attempt to stimulate the frontal lobes of the brain so that they can pay better attention. (Anderson and Rumsey 4)

The mind-body connection and the bodily-kinesthetic sense are important for all students because it allows them to think intelligently about how to use their minds to control their bodies. Activating the brain through movement is a great way to keep students engaged.

The use of movement as a teaching tool reflects the brain-mind principles. A movement-based curriculum is interactive because concepts are transformed into actions and social, if dance making is done in groups. The search for meaning is based on formed patterns and relationships, and a dance is made up of many patterns of movements. (Minton 6)

Throughout this study there were constant opportunities for the participants to create, collaborate, revise, and perform their choreography. “Eric Jensen explored how dance advances learning, especially its value as a universal language, a symbol system and a vital form of human expression. He described how highly complex movements such as dance increase brain function close to 100 percent” (McCutchen 83).

There is a strong positive relationship between kinesthetic learning and cognitive functioning. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can be used as a cognitive tool to help children when learning.

According to Seitz (1993), we literally 'think' with our bodies. He uses the example of misplaced car keys to explain how people use their bodies to think. You scratch your head. Then unfurl your fingers, one by one, using them as external memory prompts to enumerate the places you've been and rule out where you may have left them... (Anderson and Rumsey 3)

Benefits of Learning through Movement and Dance

A student who appears to be in constant motion and has incredible energy, might benefit from learning while in motion. For students, there are many benefits of learning through movement and dance some of which have already been discussed.

The Effect of Positive Social Interactions on Learning

Unarguably, it is important to build positive social interactions between teachers and students throughout the school year. It is also very important to build positive relationships between students. Teachers have an important responsibility of establishing strong positive relationships among themselves, with students and between students throughout the year.

One goal of this study was to determine whether students can develop positive social interactions with one another through movement. Many of the students participating in the study were low socio-economic students (SES).

Low-SES students often do not have stable adult role models, so teachers need to embrace the “parent” role in school. Social bonding and trust help mitigate the adverse effects of chronic stress by prompting the brain to release oxytocin, a neuropeptide that suppresses the “classic” stress hormones, such as cortisol. (Jensen 43)

The brain is very powerful because it controls our bodies as well as our feelings and emotions. When students work with one another, they share experiences with one another and create a bond, and these experiences can be positive or negative. The goal

was that the participants in this study would have a positive experience working together which, in turn, could have a positive effect on learning.

An individual's creativity and culture influence her or his dance-making, performing, and viewing. Culture, another key concept in the discipline of dance, refers to the values, beliefs, norms, and rules shared by a group and learned through communication. The relationship between dance and culture is reciprocal. Culture gives meaning to who dances what, why, how, when, where, and with and for whom, in addition to the role of the dance audience. Such variables may bespeak sexual orientation and gender roles, as well as ethnic, national, and other group identities. These may promote self-esteem, separatism, or nationalism. Dancers may reflect and/or influence culture, engendering visions of alternative possibilities. (Hanna 492)

21st Century Skills and Learning

Creating dances requires reasoning, understanding symbols, analyzing images, and knowing how to organize content. Making dances involves composing movement sequences as well as evaluating, changing, reevaluating, deleting and adding. Dance is a powerful way of thinking, doing, and experiencing.

There are several 21st century skills that high school graduates should have acquired. These include; creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Throughout this study, the participants were given multiple opportunities to be creative via visual learning, auditory learning and kinesthetic learning. The participants were also given various opportunities to create independently as well as with their partner(s).

By using a team approach to create dances, students are engaging in a form of cooperative learning. At the same time, students are learning how to work with others in a way that does not lead to arguments or fights because cooperative learning means learning to compromise and appreciate differences in others. (Minton 6)

Critical thinking was also an important aspect of this study because the participants had to think about how to think critically about themselves and their cultures.

The participants also had to think critically about how they were going to collaborate with their partner(s) when creating their final choreography.

It is important to start building these 21st century skills even when students are in elementary school. It was hoped that the students in this study would become more effective creative and critical thinkers, and better collaborators and communicators.

“When movements are used to teach academics, the creative process is used to transform concepts into movement. This transforming process is also the first stage of the same creative process used to discover movement for a dance” (Minton 3).

The connection between learning through movement and important 21st century skills was described by other authors who felt the movement in dance provided unique opportunities to develop such abilities.

Ann-Thomas Moffett (2012), for example, explored the role of critical thinking through the body, arguing that strategically constructed studio classes in improvisation and choreography promote critical thinking skills. Others are similarly exploring thinking through movement, suggesting teaching practices that encourage students to explore choices in and through movement and guide students in practicing reflective and critical thinking. (Frichtel 45)

Developing Artistic Processes And Learning

When children create their own choreography, they have an opportunity to express themselves freely. Through the creative movement process, children learn many skills that help them grow in various ways. From the time a child enters Kindergarten until they reach high school, each child can develop four artistic processes in dance including; creating, performing, responding and connecting. By the time they reach high school, each child should be proficient in each of these four artistic processes.

In this study, participants were given the opportunity to connect with one another when learning about their cultures, collaborate and create their choreography, perform their choreography, and respond to their partner(s) via movement explorations and interviews.

Some of the direct benefits for students participating in creative dance include: helping advance students in the National Dance Standards, helping students learn firsthand knowledge of a choreographer's creative process, enhances students' expressivity, and helps students develop personal growth and development. Some of the indirect or global benefits include: listening skills, concentration, better ability to articulate, divergent thinking, organization, ability to embody a concept, and self-management. (McCutchen 184)

Throughout this study, students often connected with a partner(s) to create or develop a response to the task at hand. The most recent version of the national dance standards, titled the National Core Arts Standards in Dance, are based on the processes of creating, performing, responding and connecting. In the following quotation, the author explained how it is possible to incorporate these processes in the teaching of dance.

Following principles found in research on transfer of learning, some teachers rely on educational theorist Benjamin S. Bloom's taxonomy to convey new information sequentially. Teachers use questioning strategies about dance for the cognitive (remembering knowledge, comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and creating), affective (perceiving, responding, valuing, organizing), and psychomotor (modeling correctly, mastering movement mechanics) domains. Through class instruction, student discovery, apprenticeship, or coaching, teachers can make explicit to students, and promote their reflection on, the rationale of what is taught in dance and how they can use the processes, skills, and concepts they master through dance education in other academic subjects and aspects of life, including the world of work. Giving students opportunities to practice applying dance knowledge and skills to different fields helps them build relational webs and use metaphorical and analogical reasoning. (Hanna 499-500)

Movement and Dance Can Be a Teaching Strategy

Teaching students through movement is a valuable teaching strategy. When children can use movement to connect to the content they are learning, they are more

likely to be interested in the topic. Learning in this way can make learning fun for both the children and the teacher. Minton stated the following in her book, “In my experience, students have trouble appreciating and understanding content that is not connected to their own lives. All people, in fact, learn most easily when the information to be learned can be connected to their personal experiences” (Minton 2). Since children love to move, the use of movement as a teaching tool bears a natural relationship to their lives.

Minton later stated, “One of the reasons dance can be used as a teaching tool is because movement affects the brain in many ways, and most of the brain is activated during physical activity” (Minton 75). When the brain is activated while moving, students are more engaged and interested in learning.

Teaching content such as cultural empathy through movement enables students to find solutions to problems, think outside the box, work with others and talk with others. Using movement as a teaching strategy benefits both the students and the teacher because it keeps students engaged and makes teaching more fun for the teacher.

*The Possible Impact of Teaching
Cultural Empathy through
Movement and Dance*

It is important to teach empathy to all students. When students understand empathy, it creates an environment that can facilitate connections between students and their teachers. Cultural empathy is another important concept for students to understand, however, it may be a difficult concept for many students to grasp. Since dance has the capacity to convey emotion and connect viewers to embodied feelings, it can be an ideal medium for helping students develop empathy for other people.

The Root-Bersteins have used the term empathizing instead of the words feeling response. . . . they state that practitioners of many of the arts, sciences, and

humanistic professions use empathy because it enables them to understand in a way not attainable through any other means. (Minton 74)

Some of the possible benefits of teaching empathy through dance and movement are that students develop positive relationships with their peers, strong leadership skills, as well as self-confidence. Green Gilbert discussed the development of empathy through dance when she said, “Dancers bond with one another through positive physical contact and verbal reflection. . . . and dancers discover the value of individual differences through creative exploration, problem solving, and the study of other dance forms and cultures” (Green Gilbert 6).

Allowing students to learn through movement enables them to take control of their learning since they have all the creative power. Instead of focusing on teacher-centered learning, integrated movement lessons allow for student-centered learning. Giving students that creative control enables them to become problem-solvers, leaders, and to take initiative on their learning.

Because students are focusing their minds as well as their movements, they experience an immediate and simultaneous fusion of intention, action, feeling and awareness. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1993) refers to this kind of completely absorbing and pleasurable concentration as optimal flow experience. (Zakkai 10)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate how learning about countries and cultures through movement can potentially help students show empathy toward one another. The goal was to help answer the three essential questions:

- Q1 What are students' responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content?
- Q2 What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different cultures and countries from around the world?
- Q3 Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and country?

This chapter includes the methods used to set up the research for this study and examine the data produced as an outcome of the study.

Preparation for Doing Study

The researcher developed the purpose for the study as well as how the data would be collected and analyzed followed by describing these processes in a narrative which was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. The narrative application included the purpose, methods, data collection, analysis and handling procedures, and risks and benefits if any. The IRB application also included copies of the research instruments to be used in the study and the sample consent forms for the students, their parents, and the teachers who participated in the study. The researcher had

to get permission from the school principal to conduct the study as well. The documents submitted to receive approval for this research can be found in Appendices A through D.

Research Participants and Site

The study was conducted at an elementary school located in Virginia with over 570 students. Demographics of the student population were: 73.09% Hispanic or Latino, 14.76% White (Not of Hispanic Origin), 5.73% Asian, 4.34% Black (Not of Hispanic Origin), 1.56% Two or More, 0.52% American Indian or Alaskan Native. Due to Title I regulations, more than 70% of students at the school were eligible for a free or reduced price lunch and free breakfast. The Two or More category noted above refers to students who are racially mixed.

The researcher chose two fifth-grade classes to participate in the study. However, participation in the study was optional for individual students in these classes. Although all students in each class participated in the activities and lessons, only students who returned signed consent forms were subjects in this study. Thus, there were ten students in class A, and fourteen students in class B who participated in the study. All classes, except for the one in which the students wrote poems and the final performance, were held in the researchers' classroom which is a dance studio located in the elementary school. The poem writing class was conducted in the homeroom classrooms of the participants. The researcher went into these classrooms to help the participants write their poems. The final performance took place in the theatre also located in the school. Each of the classes included in the study met for thirty minutes once a week. The length of the study was for one semester.

Research Design

The data in this study were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative processes. Most of the research analysis was qualitative since the researcher wanted to identify themes and ideas that emerged from the data collected. Quantitative analysis procedures were used when the outcome could be compiled numerically.

As noted, the school population was made up of students from many different cultures and ethnicities. To help the parents and guardians understand the goals of the study, the parent liaison at the researcher's school helped translate each of the consent forms into Spanish so they could understand the nature and goals of the study. Samples of each of the consent forms can be found in Appendix C.

Instrumentation and Teaching Strategies

There were various instruments used to collect data in this study. These included pre-and-post researcher-to-student interviews, student-to-student interviews, researcher observations, and audience reflection surveys. Although the researcher-to-student interviews were conducted towards the beginning and end of the study, the student-to-student interviews were done throughout the study. The researcher's observations were completed at various times throughout the study, especially when the participants were creating their movements for their poems and their visual artwork motifs. The audience survey was done after the final performance. The audience survey was also completed on a voluntary basis.

In addition to the student-to-student interviews, each participant worked with their partner or partners to learn about the culture of each group member. Poetry, visual art,

and movement were used to acquaint each student with their partner(s) culture or cultures.

As part of this process, each participant first completed an “I Am From” fill-in the blank poem and then shared their poems with their partner(s). Following this activity, each participant choreographed their own movement sequence inspired by their poems and shared them with their partner(s) by performing the movements they had created.

Next, the students created a visual artwork motif that represented an abstract depiction of where they were from. The creation of the artwork motif was inspired by the poems. After creating their motifs, the students created another movement sequence and shared this movement sequence with their partner(s). Having each participant create their own movements inspired by their poems and artwork motifs allowed them to delve into their kinesthetic learning.

Finally, the students had to work together with their partner(s) to create a final dance that demonstrated similarities and differences between their countries. They were instructed to use their movement sequences based on their poems and visual artwork motifs as inspiration and a guide for creating their final choreography. The students’ final performance with their partner(s) was another aspect of their kinesthetic learning.

Pre-and-Post Teacher-to-Student Interviews

Toward the beginning and end of the study, the students who were subjects, were interviewed by the teacher, who was also the researcher. The interviews were filmed by the researcher using an iPad. The researcher later transcribed the interviews.

During these interviews, the researcher asked the students questions regarding their previous experiences with cultural equity and dance along with questions about their

goals as participants in the study. For example, some questions included: Do your classmates know what country you are from? If yes, how do they know what country you are from? If no, does this bother you that they don't know what country you are from? Do you know if anyone else in your class is from the same country you are from? If so, who? Do you feel comfortable participating in creative movement/dance in this class? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.

In the data accumulated from the interviews, the students were given code numbers to ensure confidentiality. To view a copy of the prompts for the Pre-and-Post Teacher-to-Student Interviews see Appendix D.

Student-to-Student Interviews

The researcher was also interested in information the students were willing to share with each other throughout the study. These interviews took place at four points during the study. In these interviews, the students in each pair or group asked each other a series of questions about their experiences throughout the study. These interviews coincided with specific lessons planned by the researcher.

Before the first lesson began, students interviewed each other to learn more about one another. Some of these questions included: Do you think that the people in our class know a lot about the culture from your country? Why or why not? What do you want me to know about your country? To answer this question, the students usually discussed food, music, dances, or traditions from their country or culture.

Lesson one was the lesson in which the students wrote their "I am from poems." After this lesson was presented, the students again interviewed each other. First they read

their “I am from poems” for each other and then explained to their partner(s) which line in the poem was most important to them and why this was so.

The second student-to-student interview took place after lesson two had been presented. In the second lesson, the students drew their artwork motif. The questions asked in this interview were: What motif (symbol/image) did you draw for your country? Can you explain why you drew that motif? What does it mean to you?

Finally, before their final performance, the students interviewed each other once more asking questions such as: What is one similarity between our countries? What is one difference between our countries? We need to make sure that we are also representing both of our countries in our performance. How can we do this? A sample of more of the Student-to-Student Interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

Researcher Observations

The researcher was also the dance teacher in this study. As the instructor, she interacted with and observed as the students engaged in the dance activities and took notes during and at the end of each lesson. When students were working on tasks at hand, the dance teacher observed their interactions and took notes on those observations. The researcher also videotaped the final performance of student work and analyzed interactions between students as they performed in the videos.

Audience Reflection Survey

At the final performance, the researcher asked the audience members to complete a survey after watching their students perform. All students from Class A and Class B performed for each other and their classroom teachers, who made up the audience, were

invited to watch their performance. In this survey, audience members could respond only to the students' dances that were part of this study.

The researcher used this survey to find out if the audience members thought the dances communicated cultural empathy and meaning. A code system was used to identify all participant response for the purposes of confidentiality. Some of the questions on the survey included: Which groups' performance stood out to you the most? Based on your answer to question one, did that group use creative or unique movements in their performance? Did it appear that they [the students] were performing collaboratively? A copy of the Audience Reflection Survey can be found in Appendix D. It should be noted that only the teachers from Class A filled out the Audience Reflection Survey, even though the survey was given to the teachers of both classes.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data in this study. However, the major form of analysis was qualitative data, given that much of the data was collected using interviews and the researcher's classroom observations. The audience reflection survey was not very useful in terms of the goals of this study since only two teachers from Class A completed the survey.

Quantitative Analysis

There was very little data gathered in this study that the researcher could analyze using quantitative methods. However, quantitative methods were used to analyze yes or no answers to questions. The full table of the results of this analysis will be presented in the Discussion chapter.

Qualitative Analysis

When she did use qualitative analysis, the researcher looked for themes that emerged from the students' responses to the interview questions. The researcher used the same process to analyze her observations and the audience survey responses. The themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis will also be described in the Discussion chapter.

Summary

The researcher looked for themes that emerged from analyzing all the gathered data. Themes in the responses from the students participating in the study as well as the students' interactions with one another will be presented in the Discussion chapter. These themes will help investigate how learning about countries and cultures through movement and dance can potentially help students show empathy toward one another. As indicated above, a minor part of the data analysis in this study was quantitative.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the effect on students learning empathy through movement and dance. This quantitative and qualitative study was designed to answer the three essential questions and determine the impact if any of the use of movement and dance on developing students' empathy toward one another. Chapter Four discusses the data found from the pre-and-post teacher-to-student interviews, the student-to-student interviews, the researcher's observations, and the audience reflection survey.

Teacher-to-Student Interviews— Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to analyze the collected data from the teacher-to-student interviews. Although most of the data gathered was analyzed using qualitative methods, some responses were analyzed quantitatively.

Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

The quantitative analysis of responses from question one on the pre-teacher-to-student interviews are presented in the bar graph in Figure 1. This graph shows the countries and cultures of origin for the students in the two classes, (Class A and Class B), who participated in this study. In question one, the researcher asked the students, "What

country are you from?” The darker bars on the graph represent responses from students in Class A, while the lighter bars represent responses from the students in Class B.

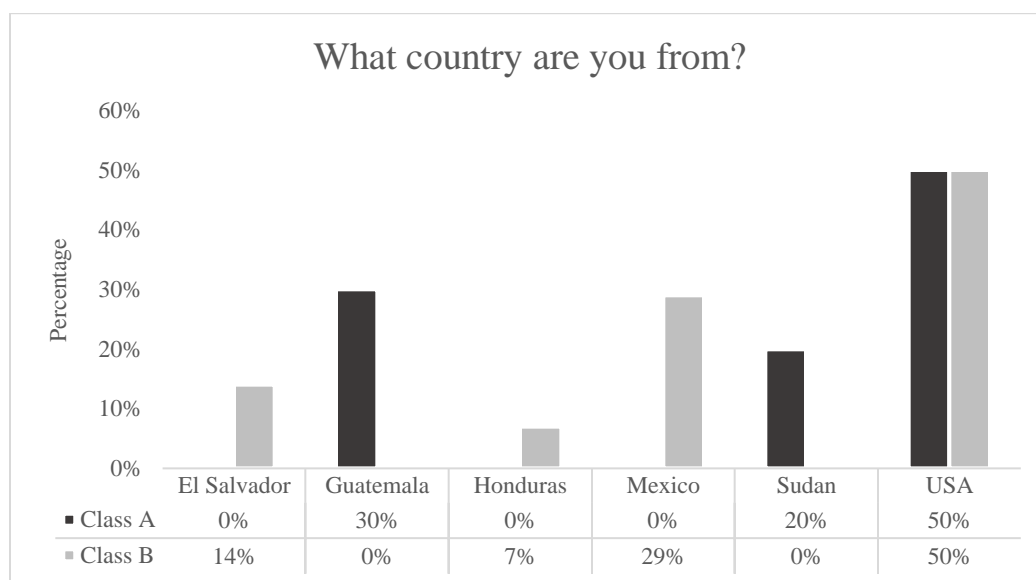


Figure 1: Question One, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

The outcomes displayed in Figure 1 do not appear to represent a very diverse student population because in both classes, 50% of the students first stated that they were from the United States of America. However, each of these same students then followed with, “I was born in the U.S., but my family is from a different country,” such as Mexico. Figure 2 shows the countries that these students identified with in addition to the United States.

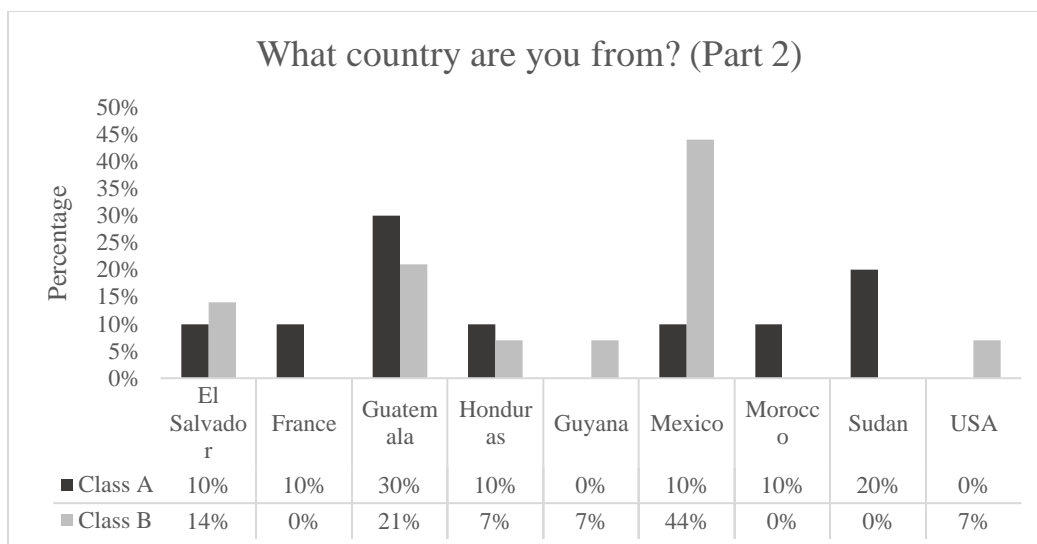


Figure 2: Question One (Part 2), Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

The researcher was interested in the students' initial responses versus their follow-up responses. In Figure 2 it is possible to see that while initially half of the students in each class identified themselves as being from the USA, they also identified as being from the same country their parents were from. Thus, in Figure 1, the outcome in terms of country of origin does not appear very diverse, however, Figure 2 displays much greater diversity for both classes.

Question three in this same interview was, "Do you still have family that lives in your country?" followed by question four, "Have you even been to your country?" The researcher was surprised to discover that in Class A, most of the students had visited their countries before, however, in Class B, only a few of the students had visited their countries. Figure 3 shows a summary of the students' responses in both classes.

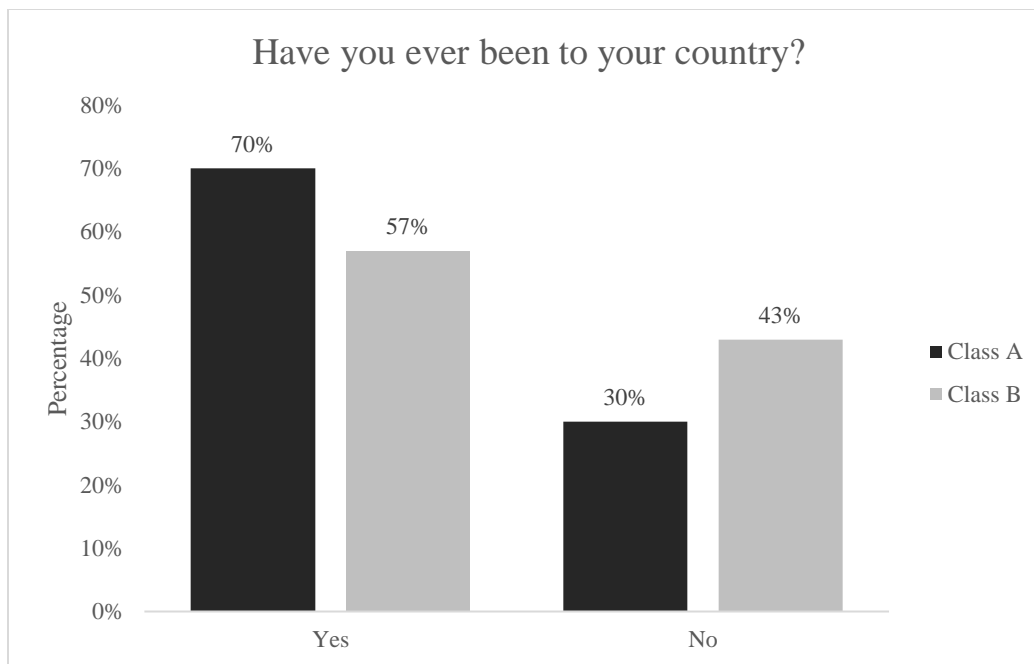


Figure 3: Question Four, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

In question five, the researcher then asked, “Do your classmates know what country you are from?” Here, the responses were mixed. In Class A, most of the students said that some or all their classmates knew what country they were from. However, in Class B, 29% of students said that “yes” their classmates knew where they were from, while 29% of students said that “no” they did not think their classmates knew what country they were from. In addition, 42% of the students also said they thought “some” of their classmates knew what country they were from. The outcome from the analysis of the students’ answers to question five is displayed in Figure 4.

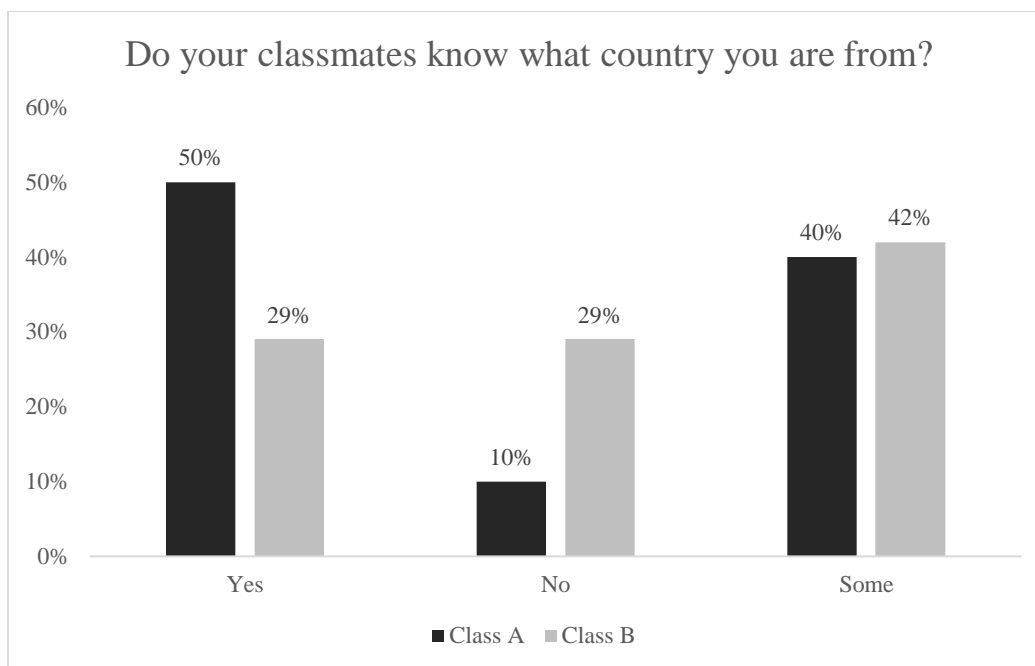


Figure 4: Question Five, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

In the second part of question five, the researcher asked, “Does it bother you?” [that not all your classmates know what country you are from]. The responses in both classes were almost unanimous because most of the students did not mind that their classmates did not know what country they were from (see Figure 5 below). Students in Class B stated, “No because sometimes I want to keep it to myself”, and “No. I don’t feel like getting in their personal information so I’m not bothering them.” Meanwhile, one student in Class B was bothered by the fact that his classmates did not know what country he was from. He said, “No. But they get it wrong. I’m El Salvadorian but they think I’m from Mexico, but I’m from El Salvador. It bothers me and I want people to get it right.”

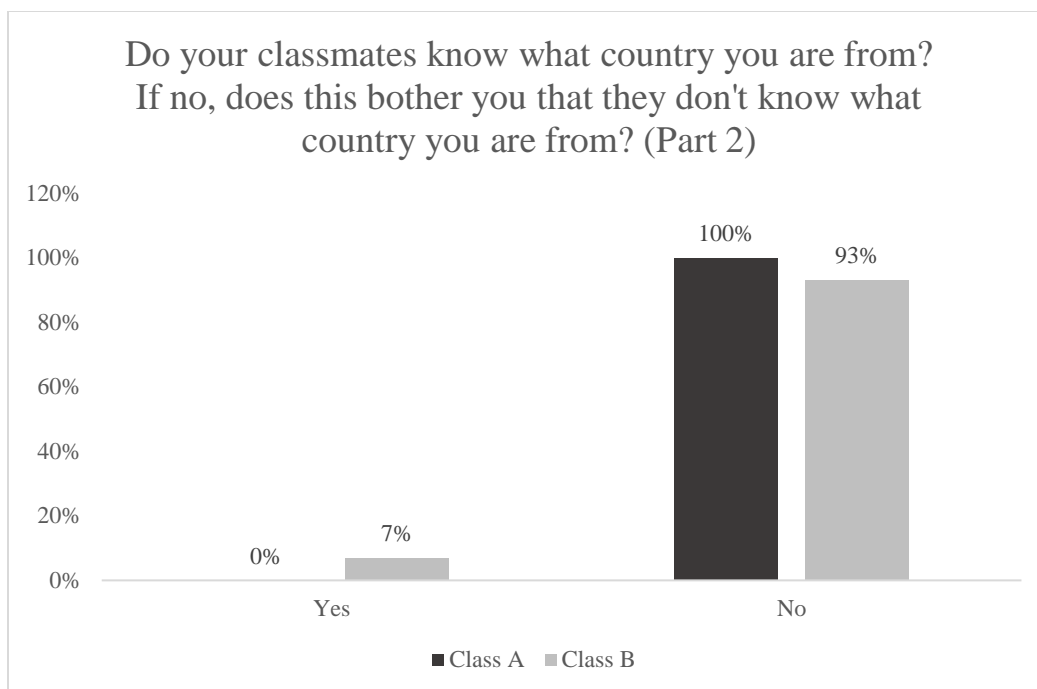


Figure 5: Question Five (Part 2), Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

Although the students did not seem to mind if their classmates did not know what country they were from, it was a mixed response from both classes about whether they knew anyone else from their country. In class A, 80% of the students indicated they could name another person in their class who was from the same country. However, in Class B, 64% of the students could not name another student in their class that was from their same country. One student mentioned, “Yeah, almost everyone is from Guatemala.” The researcher was interested in these responses because it showed there were mixed responses between both classes. See Figure 6 for more details concerning the students’ answers to the second part of question five.

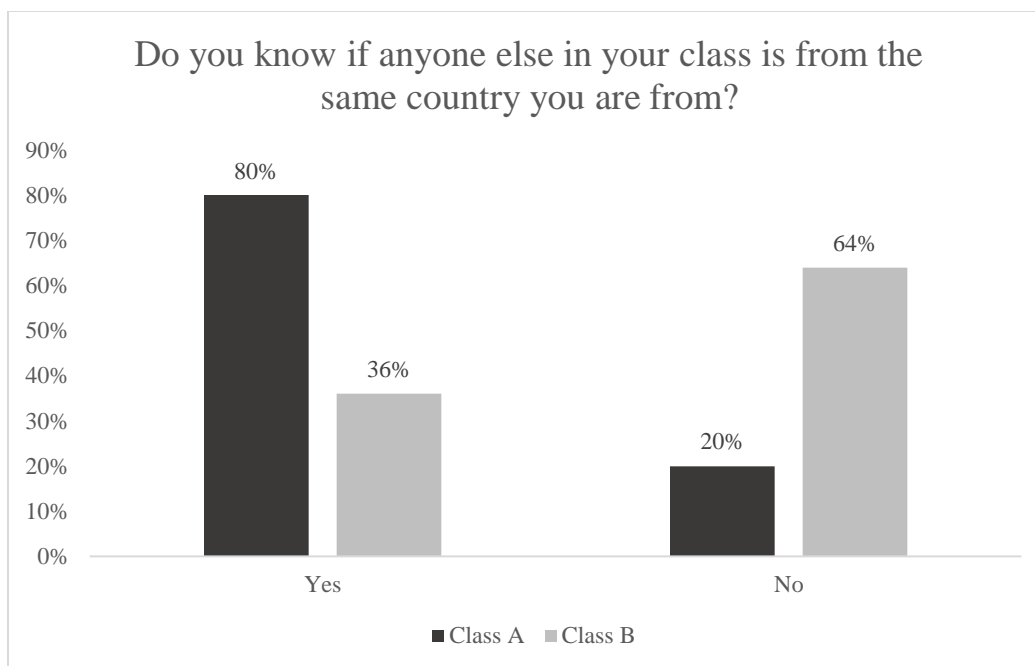


Figure 6: Question Six, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

In questions seven through nine, the researcher asked students to describe specific details about the culture of their country. For example, question eight was “If you could tell your classmates to try one food from your country what would it be? Why?” Students seemed to enjoy talking about their favorite foods from their countries. For example, one student from Class B shared, “Tamales—some of them are red and have red meat in it. Green ones are flat and you can put any sauce on it, its spicy.” In Class A, one student replied, “I would recommend they try the sweets. One of them is called Shaaria. They look like tiny spaghetti, and you can eat it. In my opinion it tastes like a glazed donut.”

In question ten the researcher wanted to know, “Do you feel comfortable participating in Creative Movement/Dance in this class? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.” The responses were a unanimous 100% “yes” in both classes. Similar themes emerged in the responses to this question. Themes that emerged were that Creative Movement/Dance was fun, a way to learn new things, a way to be active and

exercise, and a way to be creative. Student seven in Class B stated, “Yes, I do because it’s always fun moving around and cooperating with everyone.” Student eight in Class A mentioned, “Yes, because we get to express ourselves in dancing. I also like that we dance because usually when you learn something you write it down on paper. [In this class] it’s different because usually in other schools [they] don’t have things like this.”

The researcher was also interested to discover if the students not only knew if their classmates knew what country they were from, but if their classmates could name the countries of origin for their other classmates. Thus, question eleven was, “Can you name three other countries that your classmates are from?” In Class A, all the students could name other countries that their classmates were from, however only 2% could name one or two countries, while 8% could name three countries. For example, student one in Class A stated, “El Salvador, Mexico, and Honduras,” while student three in Class A said, “Sudan and Honduras.” In Class B, the responses were mixed because 57% of the students could name countries that their classmates were from, but 43% of the students were not able to do this. Of the 57%, only 21% could name three countries, while 36% could name one or two countries that their classmates were from. For example, student eight in Class B stated, “Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador;” student four said, “El Salvador and Honduras;” and student seven in Class B said, “I don’t know.”

Question twelve was based on the students’ answers to question eleven. In this question the researcher asked, “Based on your answer to question eleven, are there any similarities between your classmates’ countries and your own? Any differences? (food, holidays, sports, music, dances).” These responses were very different when the student’s answers in the two classes were compared. See Figure 7 for more details.

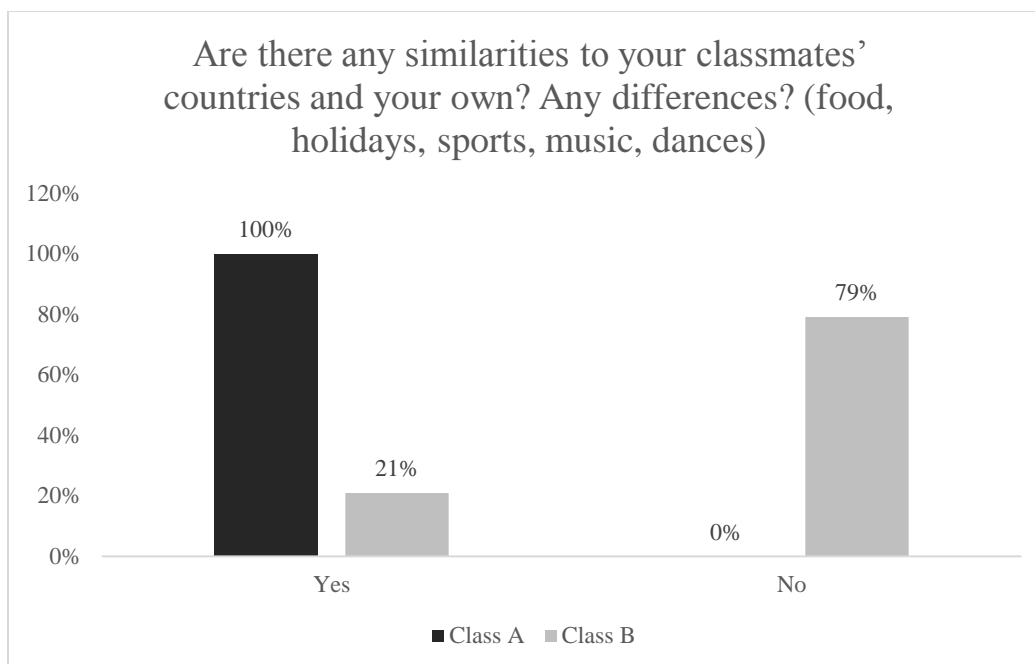


Figure 7: Question Twelve, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

The responses in the above figure showed the students were to be able to answer whether their country shared any similarities or differences with their classmates' countries. Many of the students noted similarities such as similar foods, sports, or similar languages spoken. However, one student noted that the languages spoken in each country were different. Some of the other differences mentioned included holidays, religions, events they celebrated as well as their flags. When answering this same question, two students noted that some of the countries their classmates were from as well as their own were either close to one another on a map, or in different places on a map. Another student described differences in the weather. This student commented, "in all three countries it never snows, it only rains." One student believed,

Nothing is the same. The dances are different. In El Salvador, they don't celebrate with dances they just eat food. In Mexico, they do dances and hold hands and move in a circle—boys and girls dance together, they dance to Spanish music. They wear like scarves and hats on top. Both girls and boys wear hats too.

Another student noted, “I don’t think anything is the same. They do stuff different. . . [although] like my country is poor and their country is kind of poor too.”

The final question of the Pre-Interview, question thirteen was, “Do you get along with your classmates? Do you think they understand where you come from?” It was agreed that all students thought that they got along with their classmates, however, the answers to the second part of the question varied. The students’ responses varied from “yes”, “no, I don’t know” or “some.” See Figure 8 for the breakdown of the students’ responses.

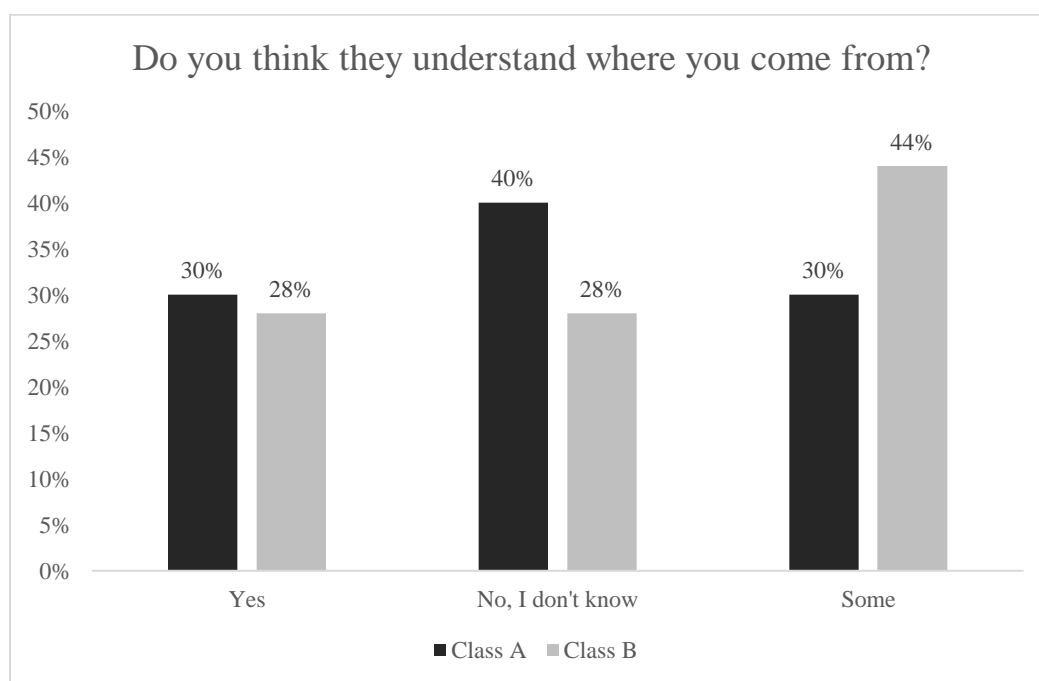


Figure 8: Question Thirteen, Responses from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

Post-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

In the Post-Teacher-to-Student Interviews, the researcher asked the students fourteen questions, some of which were repeated from the Pre-Interviews. In the first two post-interview questions, the students were asked what they liked and disliked from the lessons in this research study.

These responses were again varied. For example, in Class A, many students mentioned that they enjoyed all the lessons. One student stated, “They all had to include movements. I liked that because I was active and I need to move.” Another student in Class A said, “I liked how we combined our movements with our partner to make a cool dance.” Student seven replied, “I like how me and my partner combined our related things that we celebrate in our country and I like how our favorite food was Tamales and I liked how we had not the same sport but we still kind of combined our sports.” Another student described what he disliked about the lessons. He noted, “. . . the researching because it’s very hard to research about your country.”

The last student responded this way because the researcher allowed the students to do research about their countries for their poems if they did not know which foods, sports, or dances were popular in their countries. Having enough prior background knowledge about their countries, and then researching this information was one of the greatest challenges in this study for the participants. This challenge among others will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Responses to the same two questions by students in Class B follow. Student one in Class B said,

The first one I liked it because we learned about other people. My partner four [in Class B], I learned something new about her [such as] what they celebrate and you can learn new things about them. During the performance, you can learn about everyone in the class. Like I didn’t know. . . that some people were from different countries. . . I didn’t really like the performance because I got a little bit shy but then I realized just pretend you are like yourself and no one’s in the room and then you will forget about it and then you will perform.

Contrary to the above statement, student nine in Class B stated, “I liked the performance better because it gave me a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge of how

people are from different countries, or [places and] have different traditions or different holidays.”

Question three on the post-interview was, “Do you think the lessons helped you to understand what countries your classmates are from? Why or why not?” All the students in both classes stated that they thought the lessons helped them understand what countries their classmates were from. Some of their responses in Class A included, “Yes, because you get to know them better and its cool that you know everybody’s country in your class,” or “Yes, because I didn’t know where they were from. And now because they were creative and they told us where they were from and now I know everybody.” In Class B, Student two said, “Yes, because a lot of them really surprised me. [Referring to student one from Class B], I didn’t know he was from Guatemala.”

Question four was repeated from the Pre-Interviews. This question was “Can you name three or more countries that your classmates are from?” This time, both classes could name multiple countries that their classmates were from. Class A had included one student who could name only two countries classmates were from. However, 90% of the students could name three to five countries their classmates came from. In class B, 30% of students could name one to two countries, while 70% of students could name three to four countries other students were from. This was an increase from the answers on the Pre-Interviews, where Class B included only 57% of students who could name three countries.

In question five, the researcher wanted to know what the students learned about other countries their classmates were from. In these answers, the students described some

details about the other country. Most students shared what they learned about foods, sports, or traditions from the other country.

The researcher also wanted to determine if the students got along better with one another after the study was over. Thus, in question seven she asked, “Do you get along better with your classmates since we began the creative movement/dance and “I am from” lessons? Why or why not?”

In Class A, 100% of the students answered “Yes,” with detailed explanations. In Class B, 79% of students said “Yes,” while 21% answered “Kind of.” In Class A, the students mentioned that they got along with their partners and they practiced a lot so they worked well together. For the answer to this question student two said, “Yes. Because you get to know them better and you know more of them and the story of their country and where they are from. All the boys get along with all the girls now.” Student three stated, “Yes. Because sometimes they will be like, “What do you get for Christmas? but I don’t celebrate Christmas, but now they know I don’t celebrate Christmas.”

It was apparent the students were learning more about each other through the lessons used in this study. In other words, the students started to develop empathy for one another when they learned more about the countries of the other students. In response to the same question, another student mentioned, “Yeah. Because before we didn’t really talk about where we were from and I didn’t really hang out with them as much and I’m learning more about them. We hang out more now.”

When answering the same questions, students in Class B also commented that they learned more about where their classmates came from and that they felt more comfortable working with their classmates now. Student five in Class B said, “Yes.

Because in the classroom we work more together.” Another student remarked, “Yes. Because you get to express yourself and you get to tell them stuff that is from your country that feels more comfortable telling someone.” Student eight from Class B noted that, “Yes. Because I used to not know them a lot so like I didn’t hang out with them a lot. In the classroom, recess, lunch I hang out with different people now.”

However, there were some students who felt that they only “kind of” noticed a difference. For example, one student said, “Kind of and kind of not. Because some of them don’t show it that much. I think yeah because now I know that [student] one [from Class B] is also from Guatemala.” While another student said, “Kind of. Maybe. When we are done, if you’d like to be able to say where your friend’s country is, well, then be proud that you can!”

In addition to the other questions, the researcher was interested in learning which lessons the students enjoyed the most. In question eight she asked, “Which lesson was the most interesting or the most fun? Why?” Figure 9 shows the outcome for the students’ responses to this question.

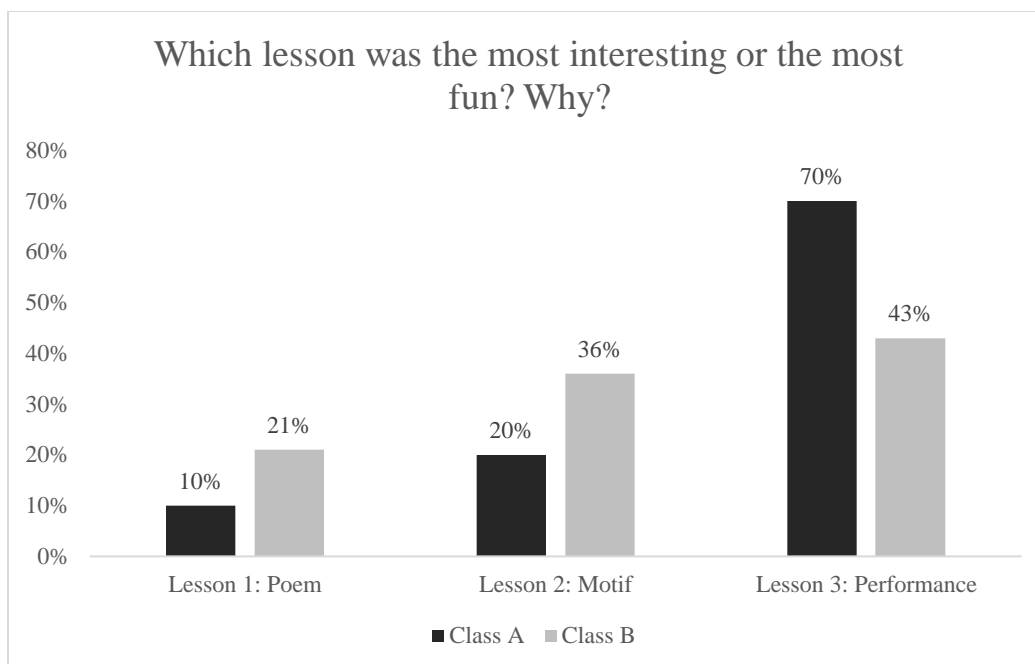


Figure 9: Question Eight, Responses from the Post-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

The students who enjoyed Lesson one (the poem) shared they enjoyed this lesson because they could tell “. . . people where you are from and what you like to eat.” The students who enjoyed Lesson two (the drawing artwork motif) felt that “we have to put our minds into it and have to think more because you could draw anything.”

Lesson three (the final performance) seemed to be a favorite in both classes. One student in Class A replied, “I liked where we got to get up and perform because I learned more about other people and how like they did the stuff and like I think that would be a good movement for next time maybe when we do another subject.” Another student mentioned, “The performance because you get to use props, and you had the lights on top and we used our bodies to create the things that we have related and some are different.” The final performance took place in the school theater, so the stage lights were on for all the performances. In Class B, Student fourteen said, “The performance because I was nervous at first but when I started it was fun.” Students in both classes said that they

enjoyed performing for the other class because they enjoyed sharing what they celebrate in their own countries with other people.

The researcher noted in her observations that some students did an excellent job working with their partners, while other groups appeared to have a more difficult time working together. For question nine in the post-interview, the researcher asked, “Did you find it challenging to work together with a partner? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.” Summaries of the students’ answers to this question are displayed in Figure 10.

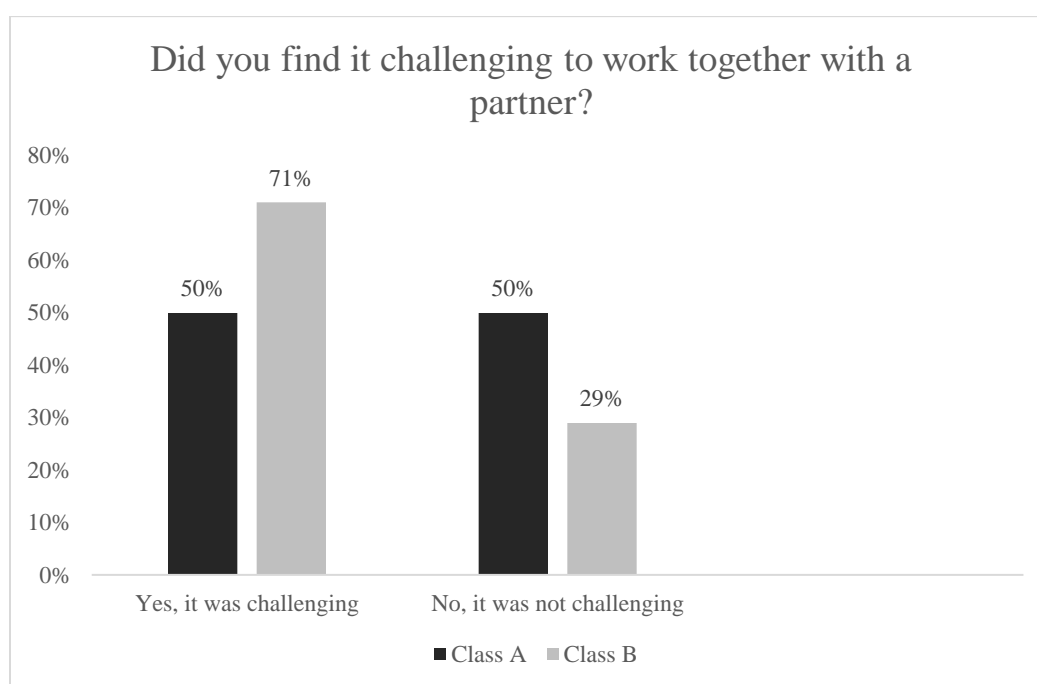


Figure 10: Question Nine, Responses from the Post-Teacher-to-Student Interviews

In Class A, students mentioned that some of the challenges were just being able to figure out how to work together. The students in this class also thought finding similarities to and differences from their partners was difficult at times. Another challenge was that some of the groups included three people and working with this number of students in a group was an added challenge. Other students discovered that working in the groups “. . . was actually fun!” and “No [it wasn’t challenging] because

me and him worked together and if we didn't like understand something we would come up with something else and practice every time.”

In Class B, the responses about the challenges were similar. Some students noted that it was challenging to figure out how to create movements with their partners and sometimes they got off task. Nevertheless, one student remarked, “I'm very used to him, and we are friends so we got along.”

When the researcher asked the students what they learned about their classmates in question ten, most students thought that they learned about various similarities and differences between countries. For example, students described similar celebrations, holidays, or foods when comparing their countries, or talked about different traditions or languages spoken in each country. It was interesting that some students also made a connection to the country that most of the students in their class were from. For example, in Class A, one student noted, “a bunch of people in my class are from Mexico.” And in Class B, one student said, “I thought that student one [from Class B] was from Mexico, because he talks a lot of Spanish and he knows a lot of the same food we do here.” In this same class, student nine stated, “I learned that we are from different classes [at our school] and no matter what they eat, what they celebrate, or what region they are from they are all human beings and they are still our favorite people.”

To conclude the Post-Interviews, the researcher asked questions eleven through fourteen. In these questions, she wanted to know, “Which group's performance stood out to you the most? And Why?” The researcher asked this question because she was curious which groups or individual dancers were most memorable and what made certain performances stand out.

In Class A, 60% of students stated that the final performance of students five and eleven [from Class A] stood out to them the most because these students spoke during their performance and shared what they celebrate and eat. The students also commented that the same two performers used the projector to show images on the screen before they danced. Finally, multiple students noted that these same two performers also used levels and created beautiful movements for birds to represent different birds from their countries. The researcher will describe more details about this final performance in the Observations section of this chapter.

In Class B, 21% of students said that the final performance of students eight and twelve [from Class B] stood out the most because they also used the projector. Some students observed that this projection included images of the performers practicing their final performance. They also observed that these same students used the props (scarves) to represent the colors of their flags and they spoke about where they were from during their performance.

The researcher learned that 14% of the students in Class B enjoyed the performance of students eleven and fourteen [from Class B] because they did a great job expressing themselves and talked throughout their performance. The rest of Class B was split when discussing which performances they most enjoyed.

Overall, most students enjoyed the experience of participating in this research because they said that they learned a lot about their classmates. Student fourteen from Class B noted that, “This was fun and was a great way to see people. . . in a different way.”

Student-to-Student Interviews— Qualitative Analysis

Four times throughout the research study the students interviewed each other. Once before the students wrote their poems and were assigned their partner(s), once after they wrote their poems, once after they drew their artwork motifs, and once before their final performance. The researcher analyzed the responses from the Student-to-Student Interviews and looked for themes in the students' responses. The researcher noticed that many of the responses that the students mentioned to each other during the Pre-Interviews were similar if not identical to their responses they gave to the researcher during the Teacher-to-Student Interviews.

Pre-Interviews (Number One)

The researcher interviewed each of the participants individually, and then the students interviewed each other once they were assigned their partner(s). In lesson one, the students conducted the Pre-Interviews by interviewing one another. Question one was, "Do you think that the people in our class know a lot about the culture from your country? Why or Why not?" In Class A, a majority of the students told their classmates that no, they don't talk about their country or that they didn't know anyone else in their class from their country. Question two was, "What do you want me to know about your country? (Specific food, music, dances, or traditions from your country or culture)." Again, the responses were very much like the responses from the Teacher-to-Student Interviews. Most students spoke about their favorite foods from their countries such as tamales. Some students mentioned popular dances from their countries such as the Punta from Honduras or the cultural dances from Sudan. The following question, question three, was "What is an important part of the culture from your country? (Food, music,

dances, holidays, traditions).” These responses included discussions about holidays or rituals like Eid, Dia de los Muertos, New Years, other holidays, and music specific to their individual countries. The final question, question four, was “What are the colors on your country’s flag?” Each student described the colors of their flag to their peers.

In Class B, the responses were similar to those in Class A. However, some of the responses stood out to the researcher. For example, in response to question one, one student said to his classmate, “No because people mite [might] make fun of me.” Another student said, “No because they think I am Mexican.” One student said, “No becaus [because] it doesnt [doesn’t] feel necessary to talk about.” Meanwhile, two students said that they told their friends where they are from and one student said, “I talk about [it] sometimes in my classroom.” In response to question two, many students discussed foods like tacos, tamales, fry [fried] chicken, and pupusas. One student mentioned how they love music and dancing in their country. An additional student discussed with his partner and said that she “have [has] a bird that represents her country.” The responses to question three included multiple discussions about New Years, Christmas, fireworks, more food, and more holidays such as the day of Guadalupe, el Dia de los Muertos, el Dia de los Reyes Magos, and Cinco de Mayo. In question four, the students in Class B discussed the colors of their country’s flags. Before the students wrote their poems, it was clear that they had some background knowledge about their countries of origin or their cultures. The Pre-Student-to-Student responses were consistent with responses the researcher gathered from the Pre-Teacher-to-Student Interviews.

Poem Interviews (Number Two)

In lesson two, each student wrote their poems in their classrooms with the researcher and their classroom teacher. The students were encouraged to research more about their countries if they didn't know the answers when creating some of the lines in the poems about their countries. After the students wrote their "I am from" poems, the students interviewed each other for the second interview. This question stated, "Can you please read me your "I am from" poem? Please explain to me what is the most important line in the poem to you and why." In Class A, the students seemed to pick the line either about the foods in their country, the traditions in their country, or the sports in their country. For example, one student said "I have a tradition Ramadan because it is really important to my family and culture." Another student said, "Mexico is a team of soccer when they all play together and work as a team." When talking about a popular food in their country, one student said, "Tamales are popular in my country they can be spicy, you can put anything in them."

In Class B, the students picked similar lines from their poems, however, some students picked the lines about what they celebrate or the colors of their flags. For example, one student said, "The most important line is [describes] the flag colors. Why because [because] it helps us [know] what country is it." Another student said, "The most important line is "celebrate New Years because it's asome [awesome] and [we] get to do fireworks." The researcher noted a theme here was that the students felt more comfortable sharing personal information such as traditions or holidays when discussing their cultures and countries. The students were engaged when sharing and conversing with one another. To become more empathetic toward another person, you first need to

understand more about that person. Following these poem interviews, each student created a short movement sequence inspired by three lines from their poems and then shared them with their partner(s).

Motif Interviews (Number Three)

In lesson three, each student was instructed to draw their own unique visual artwork motif. The researcher instructed students that their artwork motifs should be abstract. The researcher also explained that their artwork motifs do not necessarily need to make sense right away to their partner(s); if it does make sense to themselves, that is alright since it is abstract. After the students created their visual artwork motifs, they interviewed each other once more for interview question three, which was, “What motif (symbol/image) did you draw for your country? Can you explain why you drew that motif? What does it mean to you?” The students in both classes were extremely descriptive in their responses to one another for this question. For example, in Class A, student eleven said,

Drew blue lines—reminds [me] of [my] country’s bird when it flies [flies]. Drew a green rectangle, it represents a soccer field. Drew square with designs because when tradition comes—[we] sit on a carpet with lots of cool designs. Drew mixtures of colors because in my country it never snows. Colors represent the sun—the sun is really bright.

This student could clearly articulate or discuss what he drew. It is possible to view his artwork motif which can be seen in Figure 11.



Figure 11: Lesson Two, Artwork Motif, Student Five (in Class A)

In Class B, the responses were also very imaginative. Student four in Class B said to student one, “He drew a soccer field because it is an important sport and thing in his country. He drew the Virgen de Guadalupe [because] it is in [an] important holiday in our country. He drew his mom cooking.” Concluding these interviews, each student choreographed a solo movement sequence inspired by their artwork motifs. After creating their solos, the students shared their movement sequences with their partner(s).

A theme from both classes was that many students drew fireworks to represent holidays in their countries. Another popular theme was the use of circles to represent soccer balls, since soccer is a popular sport in many students’ countries. In both classes, students used the colors of their flags when designing their artwork motifs.

Post-Interviews (Number Four)

Before choreographing their final performance, the students interviewed each other one final time in lesson four. This was an opportunity for students to share once more with their partner(s) and plan their final performance choreography. The final interviews consisted of four questions. Question one was “What is one similarity between our countries?” followed by question two, “What is one difference between our countries?”

In class A, many students noted that their similarities included similar colors of their flags, their countries love soccer, or that their countries have similar foods like tamales and chicken. Partners five and eleven, in Class A, described that both of their countries are represented by a bird. The differences that they noted varied in each group. One group stated, “Guatemala is more traditional. France is more fancy. Honduras makes good food.” Another group shared, “All of our countries speak different languages, [and perform] different dances, and songs.” One pair of students shared that they have “Different birds, different traditions, [and are from] different continents.” Some students again noted the colors of their flags, but shared differences in their flags’ colors.

Questions three and four related directly to the planning aspect of the final performance. Question three was, “We need to include our poems and motif (symbol/image) in our performance. How can we work together to create a movement sequence that includes all those things?” Question four was, “We need to make sure we are also representing both of our countries in our performance. How can we do this?”

Class A did an excellent job in the planning of their final performances. The researcher encouraged students to make a timeline, chart or diagram that described their

plan when performing their final movement sequence. Partners five and eleven, in Class A, indicated, we are both going to, “do what represents our country (bird) together. . . we are going to show differences first and then our similarities.” They also mentioned that they were going to include a “nature song for birds, show traditions on the projector/while dancing, [and the] projector [will be] showing us saying our poems and pictures, and pose at the end [to represent our country].” Another pair included the number of counts that they were going to perform for each part of their movement sequence so that they had a clear plan when rehearsing. Every group in Class A chose to talk during their performance using a line from their poems such as “In my country we speak _____, my name is _____”, however, depending on the language spoken in that country, the student would then talk in their native language. For example, Student one [in Class A] said, “In my country we speak Spanish, mi nombre es Jonathan.” Another pair chose to talk about a food that they both liked from their countries, such as “We both love tamales.”

In Class B, the students noted similarities such as the colors of their flags, holidays they celebrate and foods they eat. The differences they noted were the same as the similarities. For example, one pair said, “They both have white color in the flag. Mexico celebrates Christmas. Guatemala celebrates Christmas and New Year’s.” For questions three and four, the students worked with their partners to plan how they would share which countries they were from while using their poems, artwork motifs, and movement. Students two and thirteen (from Class B) formed a very detailed plan, they said, “First we will make the first letter of our countries [with movement]. Next, we will pretend were [we’re] playing soccer and say ‘we like soccer.’ Then we will get the blue

scarf put up, then get all the scarfs and throw them up and bow.” Another pair said, we will “show a white shape. She’s using scarves to use as fireworks and I’m showing [that I am] putting the star up [on] the tree. Then we will say that I am from Mexico and I am from Guatemala.” The researcher provided white and colored scarves as props for the students to use in their final performance, but the props were optional. Another prop that was optional was the use of the projector or music. In Class B, all the students used scarves as props. In Class A, only some of the students used props. In both classes, there was only one pair from each class who used the projector and music during their performances.

If the researcher were to do this study again, she would make it a requirement to use more props and the use of iMovie or the projector in some way. The quality of performances was more creative and unique when the students used props and/or the projector. These suggestions among other topics will be discussed in the Conclusion chapter.

Researcher Observations— Qualitative Analysis

The researcher made observations throughout the entire study. During each lesson, the researcher had a notebook in which she would jot down notes throughout the lesson and after each lesson.

During lesson one, the researcher walked around the classroom while the students were interviewing each other and tried to listen to their conversations to gather a sense of the types of conversations happening around the room. The students were instructed to jot down their partner’s responses on the Interview one paper, however, there were rich

conversations happening during these interviews, and not every word got captured on paper.

In lesson two, the students shared their favorite lines from their poems and explained why it was important to them and to their partner(s). Then, each student choreographed their own short movement sequence using lines from their poems. The researcher asked the students to share their movement sequences with their partners and then after they shared, instructed them to describe one thing that they learned about their partner from their movement sequence. The researcher moved around the room as students were sharing and conversing with each other. At the end of class, the researcher asked a couple of students to share what they learned about their partner(s).

One student in Class A said about her partner; “I learned that he likes tacos. But I asked him, “How do you make tacos?”, and he said with Masa...but then I asked him, “What is Masa?” And he told me it is a tortilla flour...but then I asked, “What’s a tortilla?” and he told me it is a type of food you use to make tacos, it’s not the main meal but it’s used to make them. So now I know what tacos are.” In this conversation, this student not only learned about what tacos are, but also learned more about their partner and a food from their partner’s country that is important to them and their culture.

In Class B, many students stated that they learned what country their partner(s) were from because they didn’t know what country they were from previously. One student in Class B replied, “I saw his movements showing [he showed were about] playing soccer and soccer is a sport in his country.” In this conversation, this student is showing how she observed movements that represented an important aspect of her partner’s country, which is soccer, an important sport.

In lesson three, the researcher noted that the artwork motif drawing seemed to be very challenging for most students. They had a difficult time grasping the concept of abstract images. Although this is something that the researcher has taught them, it clearly needs more review in the future. The researcher reminded the students that sometimes something abstract may not make sense to the audience, but will make sense to the person who made the drawing—and that is okay.

Many students asked the researcher questions about what to draw because so many of the lines from their poems that they chose were literal, such as soccer, or fireworks. However, some students did a great job of creating an abstract drawing and sharing it with their partner(s). In Class B, the researcher overheard one student say to his partner [pointing to his artwork], “This is supposed to represent a piñata and this is a thermometer because it is hot in my country. These eyes are representing a face because they are dreaming of rainy days because it’s really hot there.” This is an example of a student who clearly grasped the concept of an abstract motif drawing but also was clearly depicting something important to them about their country.

Then the students shared their movement sequences with their partner(s) that were inspired by their artwork motifs. The researcher noted that some of the groups needed to add more locomotor movements and more levels, since many of their movements were non-locomotor movements. Some students even spoke during their choreography, choosing to recite lines from their poems.

Finally, the researcher filmed all the groups in their final performances to reference them later. The researcher observed that each of the groups in both classes shared similar themes such as soccer, foods they eat, and colors of their flags. If the

researcher were to do this study again, she would encourage all groups to use the projector in some way to include their artwork motifs as well as real images or videos about the students' countries.

Many of the groups just placed their artwork motifs on the ground during their performance, but that was difficult for the audience to see clearly. Students five and eleven from Class A did an incredible job of following the directions of clearly showing the similarities and differences between their countries. Student five from Class A went above and beyond and even created an iMovie video with pictures, images of him and his partner rehearsing, as well as a song to go along with their images to accompany his final performance. This was something that this student did outside of class, but he was motivated to do this on his own and he was extremely excited to show the researcher and his partner his hard work with his iMovie video!

Audience Reflection Survey— Qualitative Analysis

After watching the live final performance, the teachers in both classes were invited to complete the Audience Reflection Survey. Only the teachers from Class A (Teacher one and Teacher two) completed the Audience Reflection Survey. The first question was “Which groups’ performance stood out to you the most? Why?” Each of the teachers picked different groups for this answer. Teacher one picked students five and eleven [from Class A], while teacher two picked students two, four, and nine [from Class A].

Question two was, “Based on your answer to question one, did that group use poetry in their performance and if the group used poetry in their dance, which line from their poem stood out to you the most? Why?” Both teachers had similar responses. They

liked the fact that the students spoke the words “We love our countries” during their performance. The next two questions asked how the group that they chose (from question one) used their artwork motifs and creative or unique movements in their performances. Both teachers shared that they enjoyed how the students used different colored scarves to represent the color on the flag from their countries. They also noted that they used many arm movements that they enjoyed watching.

Question five was “Did it appear that they were performing collaboratively (performing in unison and showing support for one another)? Why?” Teacher one said, “Yes, it seemed as though they rehearsed many times before” and teacher two said, “Yes, all of their movements were well choreographed.”

Questions six and seven asked if the teachers had “noticed any changes in your students’ interactions with one another in your classroom? If so, have these changes been positive or negative?” Both teachers noted that there had not been any changes. Teacher one said, “No change. Students work collaboratively at most times,” and teacher two said, “No changes. The students have always been great at collaborating.”

In question seven, the researcher wanted to know, “Have you noticed that students have shown an increase in cultural empathy toward one another since the start of this study? If so, where have you noticed this change in their interactions in the classroom, at lunch, at recess)?” Teacher one mentioned that the, “Students have no difference in their interest” and teacher two said “No, the students have always shown empathy towards each other.” The researcher agreed that the students have always been great at collaborating for the most part, however, the researcher did notice changes in the students

and that they developed an increased cultural empathy toward one another. These discoveries will be discussed further in the Conclusion chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate if students could develop empathy toward one another by learning about each other's countries and cultures through movement and dance. The study involved twenty-four fifth grade students, their classroom teachers, and the researcher who was also the dance teacher. The study consisted of both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data. Interviews, observations and audience reflection surveys were used to collect data.

This study was conducted to answer the three essential questions:

- Q1 What are students' responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content?
- Q2 What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different cultures and countries from around the world?
- Q3 Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and country?

This chapter discusses the implications and limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

This study has shown that learning about students' cultures and countries through movement and dance does have an impact on students' ability to show empathy toward one another. However, the researcher learned it is very difficult to document empathy on paper. Since empathy is usually shown through movements or actions, the researcher's

observations of her students' interactions were one way to capture whether the students showed empathy toward each other. Thus, another important question would be to determine how the students could tell whether their partner(s) were showing empathy towards other members of their pair or group. For example, was empathy expressed through movements or actions, or was it shared through conversations that they had with their partner(s)?

Implications of the Study

Based on the outcome of this study, it seems dance does seem to influence how students show empathy toward one another when learning about the countries and cultures of their classmates. The quality and nature of responses in the interviews showed that the participants developed empathy toward one another, although these outcomes need further study over a longer period and with more participants. This would enable the researcher to gather more data.

During this study, students were absent several times, or there were snow days. This meant the researcher had to accommodate for these unexpected snow days and the absence meant a student's partner(s) could not complete the task for that lesson until the next class when their partner returned. There was also one student in Class A who started the study, but moved to a different school after the first lesson, so the researcher had to assign their partner to a new group.

Another factor that should be considered is that the researcher assigned the partner(s), intentionally, pairing participants who were from different countries. For future studies, it may be interesting to randomly pair students, or intentionally pair students together from the same countries. Even if two students are from the same

country, they might still have different traditions from those of their partner(s), so it might be interesting for the students to compare those difference and/or similarities. The researcher also intentionally paired boys and girls together, but it might be useful to pair students of the same gender together in future studies.

While the researcher had a difficult time assessing empathy, the outcome showed that the students enjoyed all the lessons, but the final performance was their favorite part of the study. In fact, 70% of the students from Class A, and 43% from Class B preferred the performance. For each of the lessons, the participants shared movements connected to their countries or cultures with their partner(s), however, it was difficult to determine if they were simply sharing movements or showing empathy toward one another. It was not until the final performance that it was clear the participants were showing empathy toward one another because they were using creativity, collaboration, and movements that they had choreographed to represent both of their countries.

Limitations of the Study

Although the participants did seem to show empathy toward one another through movement, it is important to note that there were a few limitations for the study. These included potential research bias since the researcher was also the dance teacher, small sample size, and a lack of validity for the research instruments. Since the dance teacher was also the researcher, some research bias may have occurred. Further research needs to be completed when the researcher is not also the dance teacher.

It would be important to repeat this study for a longer period and with more participants. With only twenty-four participants, it was difficult to say a small sample of this size demonstrated cultural empathy through movement. In future studies, it would be

useful to have more participants and possibly conduct this study over the course of a year rather than for a few weeks. The researcher also intentionally tried to group the participants into pairs, however there was an odd number of students in the classes, so there were two groups of three students (one in Class A, and one in Class B). It might be useful to try and have an even number of participants in the future, or intentionally make the groupings random.

Another limitation was that the research instruments were not validated. The researcher created the interview questions, and conducted the pre-and post-teacher-to-student interviews. In addition to the interviews, all the data collected in this study was compiled by the researcher. Other researchers need to collect data on the same topic to help verify the outcome.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on this study, it is evident that students developed a sense of cultural empathy toward one another when learning about their countries and cultures through movement and dance. As stated in the Introduction chapter, authors Rima Faber and Sandra Minton stated, “When a person observes something, their brain resonates with reciprocal impulses or patterns that mirror the incoming stimuli. The result is an internal neurological duplication of the external experience called empathy” (Faber and Minton 23). If the researcher were to continue this research further, she would spend more time before lesson one with movement explorations about empathy. For example, the researcher might include Anne Green Gilbert’s movement activity called “Emotion Statue Garden,” where students take turns taking on the emotions of their partners’ through static shapes with their bodies.

Much of the data collected in this study was done through interviews. However, in future studies it would be interesting to collect more of the data through movement rather than spoken conversations. For example, instead of having students share their movement phrases with one another by talking about what they observed, maybe they could watch their partner's movements and then try and mirror or copy their actions.

Another recommendation would be to require that all groups use technology in the form of an iMovie or video presentation during their final performance. Only one pair of students in each of the classes created an iMovie (since it was not a requirement), however, these performances were most memorable to their classmates, their teachers, and the researcher. A suggestion would be to show the students a sample iMovie or present an iMovie tutorial for students. Most students are very tech savvy, so this should be fun for students. The four students in this study who used an iMovie in their performances enjoyed creating their videos.

At the researchers' school, the Cultural Awareness Committee was created for the 2018 to 2019 school year. The goal of this committee is to help spread cultural awareness among students, teachers, and staff in the school. The researcher joined this committee and asked if the entire school could participate in the "I Am Journey," including each of the lessons that were created for this study. Although participation is optional, the committee approved this request, so the entire school has been invited to complete the culturally-based poems and artwork motifs in their classrooms. During November to December of 2018, the students will bring their poems and artwork motifs to the creative movement class, which have already been completed in their classrooms. In creative the movement class, the dance teacher will lead students through the movement explorations

for each lesson. The Cultural Awareness Committee is planning a Multi-Cultural night with the PTA in the spring, so one goal is to have students perform their final dances at this event.

Conclusion

It was evident that students learned cultural empathy through movement in this study, however, this study has only skimmed the surface. More research is needed to determine if dance and movement can be a successful tool for teaching students cultural empathy. It is important to show empathy toward one another, students and adults alike, so further research is required to determine how movement and dance can best be used as a tool to teach cultural empathy.

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APPENDIX A
PRINCIPAL'S APPROVAL LETTER

To Whom It May Concern,

I, _____, the Principal of _____
grant Becky Epstein permission to conduct her thesis study at _____
I am aware of the research procedures for Ms. Epstein's study.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Principal

APPENDIX B

APPROVAL LETTER FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD



Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 7, 2017

TO: Becky Epstein
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1139661-3] Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement:
Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each
Other

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: December 7, 2017

EXPIRATION DATE: December 7, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of December 7, 2018.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORMS

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



*College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance*

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
(AUDIENCE/TEACHER CONSENT FORM)

Thesis Title: Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement: Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each Other

Researcher: Becky Epstein, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Contact Information:

Research Advisor: Dr. Sandra Minton, University of Northern Colorado,
sandra.minton@unco.edu

You are being asked to take part in a research study of the effectiveness of creative movement and dance integrated with the learning about countries and their cultures to help students develop a greater sense of empathy and understanding of other students who are from a different culture or country. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The goal in this research is to study the effectiveness of creative movement and dance integrated with the learning about countries and their cultures. I will be creating and implementing dance integrated lessons and conducting interviews with the students to assess their response to the lessons. There will be a total of ten creative movement and dance integrated lessons. I will also keep a record of my class observations, but only those students for whom I have permission will be interviewed or described in my observation notes. Student interviews will take about 10 minutes for each student. The teacher audience survey will take about twenty minutes. My research will seek to answer the following questions: (1) What are students' responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content? (2) What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different countries from around the world? (3) Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and

country? As part of the graduate thesis project the research will assist the researcher and future readers of the final thesis in understanding the benefits of teaching empathy through dance.

Risks: The risk for participation in this study is minimal. There would be no more risk than being a member of any audience.

Your answers will be confidential. No identifying information will be used for presentation or publication of study results. Only coded or fictitious names will be used. All data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home. All audio tapes, other data, and consent forms will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is myself, Becky Epstein. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me with the information listed above. Please retain one copy of this letter for your records.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study, and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future references. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Sherry May, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Teacher's Full Name (please print)

Teacher's Signature

Date (month/day/year)

Researcher's Signature

Date (month/day/year)

Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date (month/day/year)

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on (date).

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



*College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance*

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
(PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM)

Thesis Title: Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement: Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each Other

Researcher: Becky Epstein, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Contact Information:

Research Advisor: Dr. Sandra Minton, University of Northern Colorado,
sandra.minton@unco.edu

Your child is being asked to take part in a research study on the effectiveness of creative movement and dance integrated with the learning about countries and their cultures. I am asking for your permission for your child to take part because your child is already part of creative movement classes at .
Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The aim of this research is to discover answers to three questions: (1) What are students' responses to use of movement and dance to teach multi-cultural lesson content? Dance and movement are a form of nonverbal communication. Dance can help students communicate with one another nonverbally about their countries of origin. The intent is to explore the varied ways movement and dance can be used to help students show empathy toward one another in a meaningful way even though they come from different cultures and countries. (2) What movement and dance-based methods can be used to help fifth-grade students develop empathy towards classmates from different cultures and countries from around the world? Students in a fifth-grade classroom come from various countries around the world and do not seem to show empathy toward other students from different cultures. (3) Which movement and dance-based lessons seemed to be most effective to develop student empathy for other students from a different culture and country?

As part of the graduate thesis project the research will assist the researcher and future readers of the final thesis in understanding the benefits of teaching empathy through dance. The research project will last for one semester. The dance teacher will meet with students once a week. The method of research being utilized in this project is qualitative in which the researcher will identify themes and ideas that emerge from the data as they are related to and answer the research questions as noted above.

Risks: The risks and discomforts inherent in this study are no greater than those normally encountered during regular creative movement class participation. I will make every effort to warm students up properly in order to avoid injury. Students will be instructed to let me know ahead of time if they have an injury or other reason they cannot participate in a particular activity. If students participate, they agree to take on all risks involved, and myself, the university and _____ are not liable.

Your answers will be confidential. Every effort will be made to protect your child's identity. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify your child. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses including the pre-interview, surveys and post-interview information. No actual names will be used. I will use pseudonyms. The goal of the research is to simply document the success of dance integration in a way that will help students have more empathy toward other students from different cultures and countries. All documents pertaining to this study will be stored in a locked cabinet in the home of the teacher or researcher. Completed consent forms will be stored in Crabbe Hall, room 308, the office of Dance Education MA co-coordinator Christy O'Connell-Black. The notes will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis, and the consent forms will be destroyed after three years.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. If you decide to allow your child to take part, you are free to withdraw your child at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is myself, Becky Epstein. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me with the information listed above. Please retain one copy of this letter for your records.

Thank you for assisting me in my research.

Sincerely,

Becky Epstein

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
PARENT/GUARDIAN

Thesis Title: Discovering Countries and Their Cultures through Movement: Fifth-Grade Students Developing Awareness and Empathy Toward Each Other

Researcher: Becky Epstein, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Contact Information:

Research Advisor: Dr. Sandra Minton, University of Northern Colorado,
sandra.minton@unco.edu

Participation is voluntary. Your child may decide not to participate in this study and if your child begins participation you or your child may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you and your child are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like your child to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future references. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Sherry May, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Child's Full Name (please print) Child's Birth Date (month/day/year)

Parent/Guardian's Signature Date (month/day/year)

Researcher's Signature Date (month/day/year)

Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent Date (month/day/year)

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on (date).

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



*College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance*

ASSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
(CHILD ASSENT FORM)

Hi!

I am doing research on creative movement and dance and how we can use it to help students learn about different countries and their cultures (foods, sports, music, dances, and traditions). That means I get to use movement and dance to help you learn about different cultures. I would like to work with a lot of fifth graders and use creative movement and dance to help you learn and understand different cultures. If you want, you can be one of the kids I work with.

If you want to work with me, you will be a part of the ten lessons that I create using movement and dance to help you learn about different countries and their cultures. We will be using music, fun hands on materials, and you get to learn about different cultures in a new way. As we move around the room and learn about different cultures, I will be making notes in my mind and use those notes later in my journal. I will also ask you some questions. This isn't a test or anything like that. The questions are about what you think about the lessons and using movement and dance to learn about different cultures. I really want to know what you think about my lessons. I will ask you some questions and I will use an iPad to record your answers. You don't have to say your name when I ask you the questions. No one will know what your answers are because your answers and your name will be kept confidential. It will take about 10 minutes for you to answer my questions. This will happen during our normal creative movement class time.

If you work with me, you must move safely to avoid injury. Even though your parents have said it's okay for you to work with me, you don't have to. If you say "yes" but then change your mind, you can stop at any time. Do you have any questions for me about my research?

If you want to work with me and be in my research, sign your name below and write today's date next to it. Thank you!

Student Name

Date

Researcher Name

Date

APPENDIX D
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

1. Teacher-to-Student Interview Questions (Pre & Post):

Code Number: _____

Date: _____

(Pre-Interview)

1. What country are you from?
2. Are both of your parents from the same country or different countries?
3. Do you still have family that lives in your country?
4. Have you ever been to your country?
5. Do your classmates know what country you are from? If yes, how do they know what country you are from? If no, does this bother you that they don't know what country you are from?
6. Do you know if anyone else in your class is from the same country you are from? If so, who?
7. What is something that is a tradition from the culture in your country? (holidays, dances, music, sports, etc.)
8. If you could tell your classmates to try one food from your country what would it be? Why?
9. If you could tell your classmates to go to one place in your country where would it be? Why?
10. Do you feel comfortable participating in creative movement/dance in this class? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.
11. Can you name three other countries that your classmates are from?
12. Based on the student's answer to question #11, are there any similarities to your classmates' countries and your own? Any differences? (food, holidays, sports, music, dances)
13. Do you get along with your classmates? Do you think they understand where you come from?

(Post-Interview)

1. What did you like about the creative movement/dance and "I am from" lessons?
2. What did you not like about the creative movement/dance and "I am from" lessons?
3. Do you think the lessons helped you to understand what countries your classmates are from? Why or why not?
4. Can you name three (or more) countries that your classmates are from?
5. Based on your answer to question 4, pick one of the countries that you mentioned. What is something that you learned about that country?
6. Based on your answer to question 5, is there something that you learned about this country that is similar to your country? If not, how is it different from your country?
7. Do you get along better with your classmates since we began the creative movement/dance and "I am from" lessons? Why or why not?
8. Which lesson was the most interesting or the most fun? Why?

9. Did you find it challenging to work together with a partner? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.
10. What did you learn about your classmates from watching their performance?
11. Which group's performance stood out to you the most? Why?
12. Based on your answer to question 11, how did that group use their poem in their performance?
13. Based on your answer to question 11, how did that group use their motif (symbol/image) in their performance?
14. Based on your answer to question 11, what movement or series of movements in the group's dance stood out to you? Why

2. Student-to-Student Interview Questions: (Throughout the study: Before the study begins, mid-way through the study, and toward the end of the study)

Code Number: _____

Date: _____

Before the "I am from" lessons begin: (Pre- Student-to-Student Interview)

1. Do you think that the people in our class know a lot about the culture from your country? Why or why not?
2. What do you want me to know about your country? (Specific food, music, dances, or traditions from your country or culture)
3. What is an important part of the culture from your country? (Food, music, dances, holidays, traditions)
4. What are the colors on your country's flag?

After the first "I am from" lesson: (Mid-Student-to-Student Interview)

5. Can you please read me your "I am from" poem? (After you read it)—Please explain to me what is the most important line in the poem to you and why.

After the second "I am from" lesson: (Second Mid-Student-to-Student Interview)

6. (After drawing the motif)—What motif (symbol/image) did you draw for your country? Can you explain why you drew that motif? What does that mean to you?

After the third "I am from" lesson: (Post Student-to-Students Interview)

7. What is one similarity between our countries?
8. What is one difference between our countries?
9. We need to include our poems and motif (symbol/image) in our performance. How can we work together to create a movement sequence that includes all those things?
10. We need to make sure that we are also representing both of our countries in our performance. How can we do this?

3. Audience Member (Teacher) Survey Questions: (At the end of the study)

Code Number: _____

Date: _____

1. Which groups' performance stood out to you the most? Why?

2. Based on your answer to question 1, did that group use poetry in their performance? If the group used poetry in their dance, which line from their poem stood out to you the most? Why?
3. Based on your answer to question 1, did that group use motifs (visual images) in their performance? Why did this stand out to you?
4. Based on your answer to question 1, did that group use creative or unique movements in their performance? What did you like most about their movements?
5. Did it appear that they were performing collaboratively (performing in unison and showing support for one another)? Why?
6. Have you noticed any changes in your students' interactions with one another in your classroom? Have these changes been positive or negative? Please explain.
7. Have you noticed that students have shown an increase in cultural empathy toward one another since the start of this study? Where have you noticed this change in their interactions (in the classroom, at lunch, at recess)?