

## **Creative and reproductive dance on high school students: An instructional strategy**

*Danza creativa y reproductiva en estudiantes de Educación Secundaria: Una propuesta didáctica*

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### **Resumen**

La práctica de la danza conlleva múltiples beneficios para la salud general, lo que ha facilitado que se incluya en el currículo de la asignatura de Educación Física (EF) en la educación formal a nivel mundial. Aun así, investigaciones recientes evidencian que muchos profesionales de la actividad física (AF) aún no se sienten lo suficientemente cualificados a la hora de planificar y enseñar danza. Por tanto, el objetivo de esta investigación es proporcionar una propuesta didáctica basada en una revisión bibliográfica de la literatura científica sobre danza y metodología. Esta propuesta didáctica forma parte de una investigación más amplia en la que se compara la AF objetiva, la AF percibida y el estado de *flow* del alumnado entre sesiones de danza creativa y reproductiva en el entorno de la EF de la escuela Educación Secundaria.

*Palabras clave: escolares, expresión corporal, danza creativa, coreografía, programa, pedagogía.*

### **Abstract**

Dance practices has multiple benefits for general health, which has facilitated its inclusion in the curriculum of the Physical Education (PE) subject in formal education worldwide. However, recent research shows that many physical activity (PA) professionals still do not feel qualified enough when it comes to planning and teaching dance. Consequently, the main purpose of this research is to provide an instructional strategy based on a bibliographic review of the scientific literature about dance and methodology. This instructional strategy is part of a larger investigation where it is compared students' objective PA, perceived PA and flow state between creative and reproductive dance sessions in the high school PE setting.

*Keywords: schoolchildren, corporal expression, creative dance, choreography, program, pedagogy.*

## **Introduction**

Dance is instructed within the Physical Education (PE) subject in schools around the whole world (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; Hardman, Murphy, Routen & Tones, 2014). It practices gathers physical, mental, psychological and social aspects and benefits, conferring to the body an integral value (Lara-Aparicio, Mayorga-Vega & López-Fernández, 2019). Nevertheless, research shows that physical activity (PA) professionals do not feel confident regarding to dance planning and teaching (Conesa & Angosto, 2017).

Consequently, two methodologically different dance sessions based in scientific research are presented, one creative and one reproductive. This instructional strategy is part of a larger investigation where it is compared students' objective PA, perceived PA and flow state between creative and reproductive dance sessions in the high school PE setting.

## **Methodology**

A bibliographic review was carried out through the Jábega catalog, CBUA, Web of Science, PubMed, SportDiscus, Scopus and Dialnet databases. The search terms used were based on two concepts: 1) Expressive Movement & Creative Dance, and 2) instructional strategy. No publication date, format or language restrictions were established. Finally, with the research evidence obtained, two dance sessions with different instructional approach were planned.

## **Results and Discussion**

Each teaching session last approximately 45-to-50-minute and consist of the following parts: a five-minute theoretical introduction (through questions to the students); a 5-to-10-minute warm-up (performing low to-moderate aerobic activities); a 20-to-25-minute main part; and a 15-to-20-minute final part (for putting into practice everything worked during the whole session). Bellow, it is the full description of each session.

### *Session A (creative):*

Request students' favorites music songs for playing them during this session.

- Introduction (5 min):

The session start with a music theory introduction by asking and explaining to the students the next concepts: tempo (beat's speed or slowness of any kind of equal duration established units in any predetermined measure; i.e., song's speed), beat (regular, stable and continuous element without any one standing out from the others; e.g., the song's heart) and accent (energy emphasis; e.g., it plays the same role in movement and music that punctuation plays in language, as it allows to group a set of keystrokes or time values providing structure and coherence to the set) (Motos & García, 2007).

- Warm up (10 min):

- The crazy chain: in groups of 5-6 members, hook with the arms forming a chain and with music, students have to move through the gym's space as the teacher indicate (e.g., walking to the music beat, to the music tempo, jumping at the accent, walking to the beat and jumping at the accent or walking to the tempo and jumping at the accent). When music stops, each group member has to separate and look for a classmate from another group to greet him/her, but at the tempo that the teacher will say (i.e., from super-slow to super-fast). Thus, they have to shake hands and say: "Hello my name is X and I like Y" (e.g., hello my name is Marta and I like to go to the beach) moving and speaking at the tempo said by the teacher and, when finish it, they have to re-hook to their group and continue the activity. For next "greetings", they cannot repeat classmate or what they like to do.
- The mirror: in pairs with the last person with whom each one have made the last "greeting" and with music, one of the pair have to move each body part said by the teacher (e.g., face, head-neck, shoulders, arms, hands-fingers, chest, abdomen, back, hips, legs and feet; then, only two parts, three, four, until ending up doing movements with the whole body and face at the same time) as indicated (e.g., movements high-low, spacious-small, sharp-continuous, strong-lightweight, fast-slow, accelerated-decelerated, forward-backward, lateral, straight-undulated, vibrated, twisted or controlled-uncontrolled) and the partner have to imitate it and vice versa.
- The sculptor and the statue: in the same pairs as the previous activity and without music, one of the pairs have to create a "sculpture" moving each of the classmate's body parts and without speaking. Once the "sculpture" has been created, the "sculptors" have to try to guess the other "sculptures" created. After that, the "sculptures" will "come to life" by moving and producing sounds (onomatopoeias; e.g., if the sculpture was a dog, it has to move and produce sounds as such). Next, the couple member who has been a "sculpture" have to be a "sculptor" and vice versa.

o Main part (20 min):

The aerobic dance world: before this session begin, the teacher places ten pictures around the classroom wall forming a circuit. An aerobic step and a spatial formation appear in each image. Students are grouping into the same groups (5-6 members) that are forming at this session's first activity. Each group have to stand in front of one of the images that compose the circuit. When music plays, all the members of each group have to organize into the spatial formation that shows the picture (e.g., all the group's members forming a line, a circle or a diagonal) and, once place, perform the aerobic step at the music's beat that the picture also shows. When four musical phrases have passed, the teacher say "change" and each group have to rotate one position clockwise to face the next image, thus, completing the circuit.

A musical phrase is made up of eight beats (Montávez & Zea, 1998). The space formations and the aerobic steps (Montávez & Zea, 1998) use are the following: two horizontal lines (=) + march; a semicircle (U) + heel digs; a circle (O) + step touch; a pyramid (Λ) + lateral lunge; in zigzag (W) + forward lunge; a pyramid (V) + V-step; a horizontal line (-) + front kick; two vertical lines (II) + alternate side lift jumps; a semicircle (Ω) + skipping; a vertical line (I) + leg curl jumps.

o Final part (20 min):

B-Dance: once students completes the circuit, each group have to create a choreography. To do this, each group have to choose, at least, four steps and two spatial formations from those practiced in

the circuit. If they choose four steps, they have to perform each of those steps during eight beats; if they choose more than four different steps, they have to divide the number of beats over the number of steps chosen (i.e., if they choose eight steps, each of those steps have to take four beats). Students have to consider that they have to add the body movement and style that they want to the chosen steps, change from one chosen spatial position to the other at the time they deem most convenient and ending with a final group pose. Once each group have their choreography assembled, all the groups have to present it at the same time and then, voluntarily, each group have the possibility of show it in front of their peers.

### *Session B (reproductive):*

The reproductive session is based on teaching a specific dance by reproducing the steps and movements performed by the teacher. In this case, the dance taught is the Bachata (Pacini, 1995).

#### ○ Introduction (5 min):

A theoretical introduction to this dance is made by asking the students: what is the Bachata? (a musical genre and a dance), where does it come from? (it come from humble and rural Dominicans musicians who sung about highly melodramatic romantic relationships and who were informal gathering in a backyard or patio, enlivened by food, drink and dance), what is Bachata dance's basic step? (it consists on alternate a "one-two-three-kick" pattern) (Pacini, 1995).

#### ○ Warm up (10 min):

Firstly, the basic step is taught to the students. Secondly, and with music, students have to move through the classroom space individually and performing that basic step non-stop (e.g., forward, backward, moving laterally, diagonally and while changing orientation).

Once students have internalized the basic step, the teacher perform a series of individual Bachata steps with music and which the students have to follow (i.e., forward, backward, turns and diagonals, with and without arm and leg decorations).

#### ○ Main part (25 min):

The students are grouped in pairs and all pairs form a circle. The teacher is placed in the center of the circle and teach a couple's combination of basic steps.

#### ○ Final part (15 min):

Once the combination has been learned, all the students practice it a few more times with music and by themselves. Finally, the couples who want to, can perform the dance combination one last time for their classmates (in the case that the whole group-class want to do this last part, the whole class will be divided in two groups to both halves represent the dancer and the spectator role).

During the creative session, the teacher gives guidelines that are concrete and open at the same time, allowing students to focus on a specific topic, but developing it in their own way. Students' favorites music songs are used. The activities carry out are based on creativity games (Lara-Aparicio, Mayorga-Vega & López-Fernández, 2021), the expressive movement components (Motos & García, 2007) and the aerobic dance (Montávez & Zea, 1998).

During the reproductive session, the teacher shows specific guidelines that the students have to copy and reproduce to learn a specific dance (i.e., Bachata; Pacini, 1995). Therefore, while the

creative session gives importance to the entire teaching-learning process, the reproductive session focused on the final outcome.

## Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to provide a dance instructional strategy for high school PE classes based on a bibliographic review of the scientific literature.

This research is part of a larger investigation where it is compared students' objective (PA), perceived PA and flow state between creative and reproductive dance sessions in the high school PE setting. Hence, this research provides two dance sessions in the high school PE setting. One of this two dance sessions is based on a creative methodology and, the other one, based on a reproductive methodology.

In addition, the results obtained from this research may contribute to fill a gap about dance planning and teaching by providing quality information for PA professionals. To provide with this quality information is really necessary due to the confusion that these professionals feel about it, and, also, vital to be able to achieve in students all the benefits that dance practice can provide.

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