

Abstract No. 5.7

Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 14:15-15:00

Title: Teaching Concepts to Children Using the BEST Elements of Dance

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Main focus: Mainly practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: Available research on the impact of the arts on learning and education demonstrates a significant correlation between quality arts instruction and academic learning and cognition (e.g., Deasy, 2002; Ingram & Riedel, 2003). In addition, there is a growing body of research demonstrating the positive impact of integration of the arts including rhythmic and movement-based activities on learning for students with disabilities (e.g., Deasy, 2002; Corbett, Wilson, and Morse, 2004; Mason, Thormann, & Steedly, 2004; Kern, Wolrey & Aldridge, 2006; Srinivasan & Bhat, 2013). While creative dance and movement-based arts integration activities have been shown to improve student outcomes, teachers may be reluctant to use them as a context for learning in special education classes (Nelson, Paul, Johnston, Kidder, & Hyte, 2014, Nelson, Paul, Johnston, & Kidder, In Press). Although, the research base on using dance activities with students who are deafblind is limited, interactive movement activities are congruent with evidence-based practices in the field of deafblindness that include child-guided learning, active and coactive movement, and responsive, harmonious interactions.

A multidisciplinary university course taught by the presenters increased pre-service teachers' capacity to use creative dance as a context for learning in special education settings. A primary focus of the course involved using the elements of dance known as Body, Energy, Space, and Time (BEST) (Green-Gilbert, 1992). The pre-service teachers used BEST to develop instructional programs for teaching creative dance/active movement activities to students with disabilities including students with visual impairments and deafblindness. The elements of dance known as BEST and their corresponding concepts proved to be a useful tools for developing creative dance lessons designed to teach academic, adaptive, and social skills. In particular, social connectedness among students and adults was fostered during the creative dancing. In addition, BEST can be incorporated in instructional programs for teaching skills across academic and community settings.

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce the BEST elements of dance that include; Body (e.g., body parts, balance, and inner self), Energy (e.g., adult led flow, child led flow, balanced turn-taking, biobehavioral states, self-regulation, and motivation), Space (place, size, inward and outward focus, orientation and mobility,) and Time (e.g., rhythm, anticipation, patterns, and timing) as a context for teaching academic, adaptive, and social skills during creative dance lessons to students with sensory impairments. First, workshop participants will learn the specific concepts associated with each dance element



and strategies for using the concepts to support functional skill development for students who are deafblind. Next, case studies with video will be presented to exemplify ways in which BEST can be used to teach concept development and social skills during creative dance classes. Finally, participants will practice using BEST as a context for teaching academic and social skills through creative dance lessons for students who are deafblind.