Innovative Movement and Music Strategies for the Classroom

The presentation focuses on strategies for incorporating movement, dance, and musical elements in any classroom on various subjects. The focus will be primarily on a movement exercise known as the Brain Dance, which was developed by Anne Green Gilbert. Through movement improvisation that focuses on waking up the mind and the body, we will explore how to combine this movement with musical concepts that are taught in the classroom. The presentation also incorporates best practices for strengthening creativity in the classroom. The presenters will finally discuss how to build partnerships between the creative and performing arts. Participants should wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to move.

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Dance is the Hidden language of the Soul
-Martha Graham
BrainDance
copyright Anne Green Gilbert--www.creativedance.org

Benefits: The BrainDance, according to Anne Green Gilbert, is “crucial to the wiring of our central nervous system.” Anne lists the following benefits (both for children and adults) on her website, creativedance.org:

The benefits for children and adults in cycling through these patterns include:

Reorganization of the neurological system: The fundamental movement patterns wire the central nervous system laying the foundation for sensory-motor development and life long learning. Cycling through these patterns on a daily basis may correct flaws in a person's perceptual process and reorganize the central nervous system so to develop better proprioception, balance, attention, memory, eye-tracking, behavior, sensory integration, and motor skills.

Increased blood and oxygen flow to the respiratory system and brain: The brain consumes one-fifth of the body's oxygen. Deep breathing is essential for a fully functioning body and brain. All movements and rhythms are based on breath.

Enhanced core support, connectivity, and alignment: Becoming aware of the visceral and muscular systems that support the body leads to correct use of body structures and helps children and adults to be injury-free and move with ease and coordination. Each pattern underlies and supports the next pattern and when done in succession brings connectivity to our use of the body, reflecting an integration of body and mind.

Deeper understanding of the elements of dance technique: The fundamental movement patterns are an integral part of dance technique. Whether taking a Ballet, Modern, Jazz, or Creative Dance class, students are able to integrate and apply the patterns of the BrainDance to their technical skill development. Dancers acquire and practice skills with more ease when they are aware that a particular pattern underlies the movement. Movement intent becomes clearer as dancers embody the BrainDance patterns.
Breathing and stretching

Tactile: squeezing, tapping, patting, and brushing your whole body

Core-distal: stretching out to all 4 distal points (arms and legs), and pulling into small ball

Head-tail movement
forward and back
side to side
rolling/ twisting through spine

Upper-lower connection
ground lower body; move upper body
ground upper body; move lower body

Body-side connection
ground one side of body; move other side
repeat for other side

Hand-eye coordination
horizontal tracking following your thumb
vertical tracking (elbow to knee on each side) following your thumb
marching in place, wrists to knees, following first one hand, then the other

Cross-body: elbow to opposite knee, for example

Vestibular
Swinging: be sure to engage the head
Spinning: both sides and jump up and down in-between
Incorporating Music and Rhythms in the Classroom

Benefits:
- Eases physical pain
- Reduces Stress
- Meditative State
- Awakes the mind
- Elevates the mood
- Helps one think Creativity to solve problems
- Helps one perform better under high pressure situation
- Music training helps develop brain areas involved in language and reasoning
- Provides glimpse into other cultures and teaches them to be empathetic towards the people of these cultures.
- Music study enhances teamwork skills and discipline
- Allows for self-expression and individuality
- Brings a sense of community within the classroom

For More Information: *Twelve Benefits of Music Education* by Carolyn Phillips. Phillips is the Former Executive Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony, CT.

Creativity Exercise: Listen to various music
- Describe the mood, character, and emotion
- Relation to society, history, culture, language, etc.

Improvisation Rhythm Games
- Everyone has a heartbeat thus everyone has rhythm
- Walking, clapping, stomping to the rhythm

Call and Response with Singing

*Dalcroze Eurhythmics* (http://www.dalcrozeusa.org/)
- Teaches concepts of musical structure using movement
- Founded by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950)

*Solfege Singing and hand symbols*
- Kodály Method
- From Sound of Music Musical (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgawkL3zhfE)
- More Information: (http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Solf%C3%A8ge.html)
Laban Movement

Founded by Rudolf Laban (1879-1958)
Study/analysis of basic principles of human movement structure and purpose
For everyone: the musician, actor, dancing, entertainer, business person, etc.

Flow: Bound or Free
Space: Direct or Indirect
Time: Sudden or Sustained
Weight: Strong or Light

More Information:
(http://www.ista.co.uk/downloads/LabanMovementbyJillianCampana.pdf)

Thank you!