

# Teaching Movement

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UNCSA

RISE TO GREATNESS

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Over the past few months, I taught fundamental movement principles to the Pre-Kindergarten children at Quality Education Academy. It was truly incredible to see their steady progress as the fast-paced curriculum developed.

Many of the kids were introduced to new concepts such as rhythm, spotting (focused on a specific point in space while turning in order to maintain balance and stabilization of the turn), and social dance classroom etiquette.

When I would have them skip across the floor to a waltz, many of the children were only beginning to understand “skipping on beat” and musicality. However, by the end of the semester, almost all of them understood and were able to apply proper body alignment (thanks to the core roll downs, toe dips, and practice of good posture while sitting on the

ground on their sitz bones) while skipping on beat and practicing nice pliés in sixth position (both feet together in parallel).

Their knowledge of classical dance terminology improved significantly; I had tears in my eyes when they proudly understood plié means “to bend” and sauté means “to jump” and could properly execute both movements in sixth position. The students were starting to grasp the concept of core strength and how vital those specific muscles are for all aspects of dance through their daily warm up routine.

There is no experience in comparison, however, to watching those children’s faces light up in awe as Jacque and Zeek performed their solo variations. They were inspired and excited to have two professionals perform for them right in front of their very eyes. Many had never heard of ballet before we started working with them, let alone seen a live performance of the art form. This was completely compelling and fascinating to their enamored young minds; it was heartwarming to see their hands shoot up following the performance when asked who wanted to be a dancer when they grew up.

The children were enthusiastic and eager to share the dance we had taught them as well as their “wind dances” (traveling across the floor practicing either calm, light, and graceful arm movements or fast, energetic, and rapid arm movements). The students’ facial expressions showcased their ambition to do their best and demonstrate all that they had learned in such a short period of time. One particular student even broke out of her shell and performed a dance she learned for the parade in front of her peers, teachers, and the two guests. It was a pleasure to get to know the students’ individual, unique personalities and to see how far they came in terms of movement vocabulary, as well as the care and respect they developed for themselves and for those around them.

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