

WE DANCE TOGETHER:
MAKING CONNECTIONS
THROUGH DANCE



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Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
 1. List at least two ways that dance can promote joint attention skills.
 2. Describe to a coworker the positive impact of equal status on peer relationships.
 3. Identify at least one way they can immediately implement a visual support strategy into an inclusive group setting.
 4. Name at least one alternate activity to which the We Dance Together structure could be applied in the school setting.

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Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

The student

- demonstrates limitations in speech and/or language that has a significant impact on their ability to verbally communicate,
- requires supplementary Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

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•Background History

•We Dance Together Class

•Research Study


Agenda

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Background History

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Purple Dance!



• photo credit: Hiromi Yamada Platt

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North College Hill

- Economically Disadvantaged: 70/100%
- Students with Disabilities: 21.4%
- Current Enrollment: 1256
 - Black 77.7%
 - Hispanic 4.6%
 - Multiracial 11.0%
 - White 6.3%

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What if...

- my students had an opportunity to dance?
- we structured a class to reduce aide support?
- their peers could see them in class?
- they danced together?

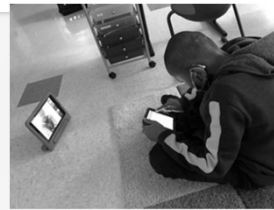
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We Dance Together: 2019-2020

- A reverse-inclusion class
- First year of funding from the Ohio Education Association
- "Welcome friends to my dance class!"
- "I didn't know he could do that!"
- COVID

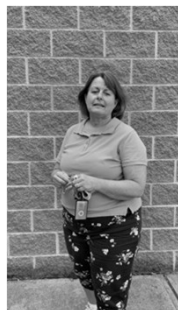
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2020-21 Blended Learning



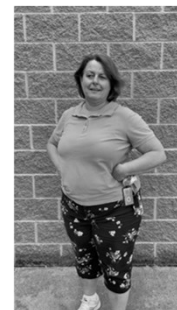
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Anecdotal Data



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Anecdotal Data



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Joint Attention-Look!

"Joint attention happens when two people pay attention to the same thing and let each other know that they are sharing that moment. They do this by looking at each other, gesturing (pointing to it), and/or saying something about the thing they are paying attention to." The Hanen Center

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Anecdotal Data

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What is going on here?

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School Belonging

- Defined as "the extent to which [students] feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others...in the school environment" (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 61)
- Students with disabilities do not report the same level of school belonging as their typically developing peers (Cullinane, 2020) and do not experience the same rate of peer acceptance (Bossaert, et al., 2015)

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Extracurricular Activities

- Participation in extracurricular activities is linked to heightened sense of school belonging (Blomfield & Barber, 2010; Cullinane, 2020; Waters et al., 2010)
- 62% of surveyed special education teachers reported that none of their students with disabilities participated in any school-based extracurricular activities (Agran, et al., 2012)

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Social Participation

- Chung et al. (2012)
 - Multiple social interaction opportunities for students without disabilities throughout the day
 - Students with disabilities spent more time interacting with staff
- Raghavendra, et al. (2012)
 - Students with CCN and physical disability (PD), PD, and typically developing (TD)
 - CCN group: lowest mean number of acquaintances/friends, engaged in fewer activities, and exhibited higher levels engagement with staff

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Contact Hypothesis

- We can reduce bias between groups by engaging in meaningful contact
- Four facilitating conditions: equal status, common goals, cooperation, leadership support (Allport, 1954)
- Students with sustained contact with out group demonstrated significant preference for having those members as friends/classmates and attributed more positive attributes to them when compared to no-contact group (Consiglio et al., 2015)

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We Dance Together

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Helpers

- One barrier to true social inclusion is the lone role of peers as helpers to students with disabilities (Block 1998.)
- Looking through the lens of the Contact Hypothesis, equal status cannot be attained if one person is essentially responsible for helping the other (Allport, 1979.)
- The WDT program was designed to promote equal status for all participants and reduce emphasis on “helper” relationships.

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Contact Hypothesis

Condition	How Met
Cooperative Activity	Partner Work Circle Arrangement (no front/back rows)
Common Goals	Engagement in enjoyable activity All students demonstrated interest in activity
Equal Status	Accommodations (visual schedule, support) De-emphasis on verbal communication Familiarity (routine establish pre-integration)
Supportive Leadership	Instructor familiar with students, confident in each student's ability

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Interest Survey

Name: _____

Circle your answer:

1. I like to dance

yes sometimes no

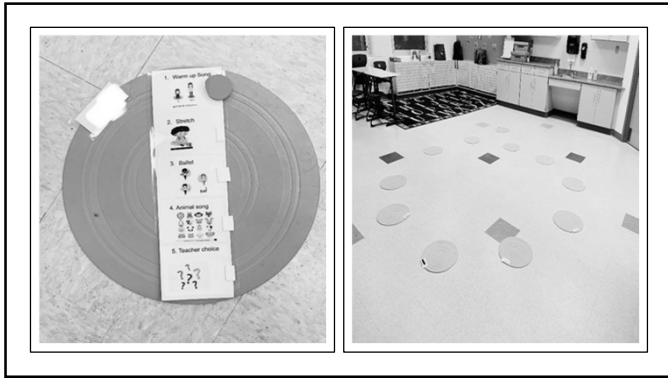
2. I like to move my body

yes sometimes no

3. I like to act silly (when I am allowed to)

yes sometimes no

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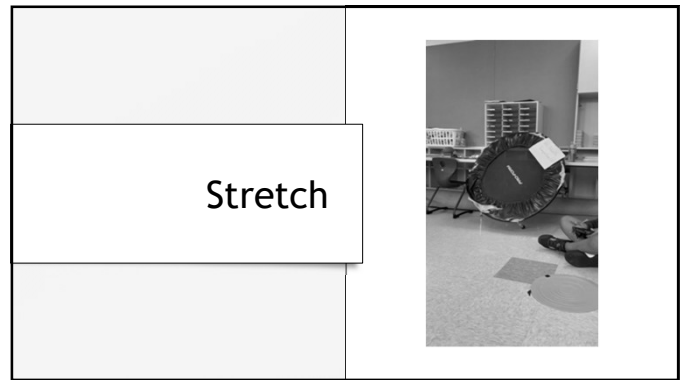
Stand Up/Sit Down

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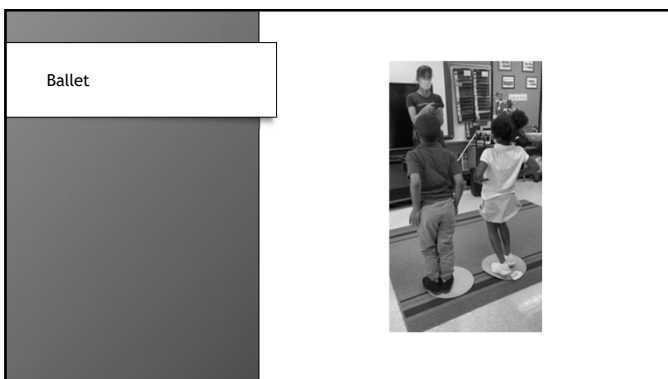
Stretch

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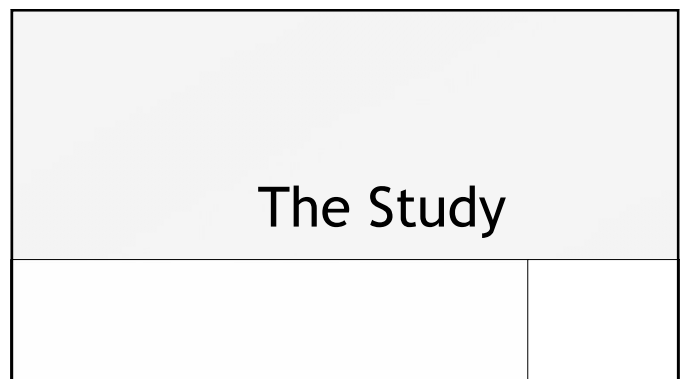
Stretch

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Ballet

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The Study

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2022-2023 Study

- Mixed methodology single case study investigating the social impact of the “We Dance Together” program, using the theoretical framework of the Contact Hypothesis
- Four second grade students with CCN participated in dance program for six weeks prior to the study
- Four second grade students without CCN participated in dance program for six-week intervention

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Study Participant Demographics

Group	Total	Female	Male
Intervention	4	1	3
Control w/contact	19	12	7
Control w/o contact	13	6	7

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Research Question	Favorability Survey	Peer Nomination Form	Semi-Structured Interview	Preferred Interactions Scale
1: How do peers characterize their relationship with elementary students CCN before & after participation in a six-week inclusive dance class?		✓	✓	✓
2: How does participation in an inclusive dance program impact peer acceptance of students with CCN?	✓	✓		✓

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	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Everyone can learn to dance			
It is easy to be friends with someone who has trouble talking			
Everyone can learn to read			
It is hard to be friends with someone who has trouble talking			
Everyone can teach you something			
We can learn about each other without talking			

Favorability Survey

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Favorability Results

- Student participation in the We Dance Together program (intervention group) resulted in significantly increased favorability towards outgroups
- The control group with contact demonstrated a decrease in favorability scores, resulting in the lowest mean group score of the three groups
- The control group without contact demonstrated no change in favorability scores

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	1	2	3	4	5
Who do you like to play with in your classroom?					
Who do you like to help in your classroom?					
Who would you like to invite over to play at your house?					
Who do you want to learn more about?					
Who are your friends?					

Peer Nomination Form

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Peer Acceptance Through Nomination

- Calculated total of “play with”, “invite over”, and “friends”
- No significant changes in peer acceptance through nomination

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“Learn more about” Rates

Group	Mean		p
	Pre	Post	
Control with contact	.50	1.75	.02
Intervention	.25	0	.39

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“Like to Help” Rates

Group	Mean		p
	Pre	Post	
Control with contact	2.0	2.0	1.0
Intervention	0.5	1.5	.05

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Photo 3: “This is Bob/Betty. S/he can walk just like you, but s/he has trouble talking so s/he uses sign language and pictures. S/he is also in (2nd) grade.”



Preferred Interactions Scale

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Bob/Betty Peer Acceptance Scores

- Combination of play with at recess, invite over, play game with, be friends with
- No change pre to post intervention for total score
- Biggest change was increase in the area of “play with at recess”

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Interviews: Pre-Intervention

Tell me about your best friend:

Familiarity (known preferences): “like to play game”, “want to go to Legoland”

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Interviews: Pre-Intervention

What are some things you like to do with your best friend?

Play with: "play at recess", "play soccer together", "play morning tubs"

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Interviews: Pre-Intervention

Tell me about someone you know who does not talk or is hard to understand:

Characteristics (physical, communication): "he talk umm in like in a monster voice", "she has a talker", "she has a ponytail"

Familiarity: "like playdough", "like to go to reading group"

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Interviews: Pre-Intervention

What are some things you can do with this person?

Help: "teach him how to learn and talk", "push her on the swing"

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Interviews: Post-Intervention

Tell me about your best friend:

Familiarity (known preferences): "favorite color is red", "we talk about our problems"

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Interviews: Post-Intervention

What are some things you like to do with your best friend?

Play with: "play computers", "play soccer"

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Interviews: Post-Intervention

Tell me about someone you know who does not talk or is hard to understand:

Characteristics: "keep mask on", "have a talker"

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Interviews: Post-Intervention

What are some things you can do with this person?

Help: "helpin him talk", "help"
frequency of mentions dropped from eight to three

Play With: "they play with me and they do be friends with me", "we can play outside and we can play outside to recess", "play with her for morning tubs"

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A Note on "Helping"

First dance session:

- Participant one announced that they (she and participant two) were there "to help (Jenny)!"
- Participant one asking the whereabouts of Jenny's aide

Final dance session:

- Participants noted to follow teacher models to silently prompt/sign to support their peers

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Conclusion

- Student participation in the We Dance Together program resulted in significantly increased favorability towards outgroups ("everyone can...") in general as well as changes in how relationships with peer with CCN were described.
- While peer acceptance rates were unchanged, intervention participants significantly increased in their desire to *help* their classmates with CCN, as well as in their preference to *play with* a fictitious student with CCN at recess.
- Intervention participants maintained the theme of being a *helper* following intervention but began to also describe their relationships in ways that more closely resembled typical friendship.
- The control group with contact demonstrated a decrease in favorability scores, resulting in the lowest mean group score of the three groups.

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These results suggest that participation in the intentionally structured WDT program impacted students differently than the casual unstructured classroom contact.

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Recommendation 1

- We Dance Together Program Model
 - Extra time
 - Familiar setting
 - Fading of aide support
 - Communication and accommodations

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Recommendation 2

- Social Interventions at Recess
 - "Play at recess" was an area of increase
 - "Play sports with" was related to friendship
 - Accessible for rehearsal in most circumstances

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Recommendation 3

- Modeling How to Help Like a Friend Would
 - Goal is not to be like a teacher/aide
 - Need to discover strengths and how to communicate and increase familiarity

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Dissertation



Dance Video

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Questions?
Follow up?

Email Me!
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Follow me!

- Instagram: together.cincy
- Website: togethercincy.org

**Together
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LLC

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