

Old Dances, New Ways!

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Folk dances are a great way to create a community in your classroom. When you begin at an early age the students normalize dancing with others and continue as they mature. Creating the expectation of respect to all is imperative to students' comfort level.

The folk dances today are ones that my students have always enjoyed, but as the students get into 4th and 5th grade they become more self conscious.

When we added some new music to our old dances and changed up the style, students became more invested and began suggesting songs they enjoyed for us to try as dances! Many will work, with simple modifications.

Hello-Goodbye (Mixer)

Focus: Creating body percussion patterns as class

Challenge: The BTS version has a refrain that does not fit with the original dance. This allows a great opportunity for improvisation. Since it is a mixer and students will have different partners, consider having students create 8 beat patterns. Have them share and then choose 4 of those to create 32 beats. This will become the refrain for the dance.

Music:

- Traditional- Any jig or reel
- Pop music option- Dynamite by BTS
 - Create 32 beats of body percussion for refrain (4, 8 or 16 beats repeating is fine as well. Each class is different!) This will be a whole class refrain.
 - Practice Tips
 - Practice promenade
 - Double shake- right hand in right, left hand in left. I have students face partner and then shoulder to shoulder (you can always change this to just walking with a partner if students aren't ready, make it work for you!)
 - Discuss how to find a partner
 - Raise your hand high so that you can find someone else without a partner.
 - Work on left and right circle

Grumpy March

From: Sashay the Donut (New England Dancing Masters)

Focus: steady beat, phrasing

Challenge: This is the same dance as the original. The biggest challenge is the clockwise/counterclockwise circle. It is fast and there is usually a lot of bumping into each other.

Music:

- Wizard's Walk/ Red Crow
- Pop music: Roundtable Rival, Lindsey Stirling (the end is a bit goofy, so be sure you practice! I use a 16 beat introduction with students clapping along so that we finish when the piece ends.)
 - Practice tips
 - Longways formation
 - Have students greet their partner
 - Work on partner clap
 - Discuss counter clockwise movement and oval shape (the big circle movement gets challenging since the tempo is brisk.)

La Bastringue (Mixer or non-mixer)

From: Chimes of Dunkirk, (New England Dance Masters)

Focus: Creating with a partner

Music:

- La Bastringue (found on Chimes of Dunkirk CD)
- Pop Music option- Kindness (Harry Styles)- students create pattern for refrain
 - Practice Tips
 - Work on dosido
 - Practice looking at the wall and walking back to back. This is always a tough one the first few times!
 - Promenade- Double Shake (see Hello-Goodbye)
 - Additional fun!
 - This dance can begin as a partner dance and move to a mixer. Consider working on an 8 beat improvisation where students create without a partner. During the promenade they share that pattern and then the class does an 8 beat stomp, stomp, pat, pat, clap, clap, snap, snap pattern.
 - It's a great addition to the dance when it becomes a mixer. I do this during the promenade for a few reasons. My students struggle with promenades and mixers in a circle. I often do this dance in 3rd grade as a simple dance, 4th as a mixer and then add the promenade in 4th or 5th grade.

Kings and Queens

From: Sashay the Donut (New England Dance Masters)

Focus: Quiet Movements

Music:

- On the Danforth
- Pop Music Option- Love Story (Taylor Swift)
 - Practice Tips
 - Palm turn
 - Work on palm to palm (thumbs do not match)
 - Eye Contact turn “mom look” turn (formerly gypsy turn)
 - Work on turning with the head leading.
 - Slower sashay (8 beats down, 8 beats back)
 - Instead of “head couple” I may call it “The Royals”
 - This is one of my students' favorites! They love the bowing and playfulness of it, and I love that it is a calming dance. We’ve done this at the end of class and used it in a concert during our family dance time. The eye contact part can be very challenging for the students, but they really get into it, once they have done it a few times.

Heel and Toe Polka

From: Chimes of Dunkirk

Focus: In/Out, circle formation

Music:

- This Old Man and Jenny Lind Polka
- Pop Music Option- Can’t Stop the Feeling (Justin Timberlake)
- Practice Tips
 - Work on inside and outside using smaller movements
 - When students are ready to move to a partner, work on knowing who stays and who moves. I use scrunchies to help students out!