



Lesson: Evolution of Dance

Middle School

STANDARDS: New York: Strand # 3: Making Connections

- Students illuminate their own relationship to dance by exploring the dances of different cultures and periods, find shared elements among the arts and use video and interactive technology to support their dance learning.
- Use dance websites and Internet teaching programs in guided sessions.
- Students make inquiries into the variety of careers in dance and dance-related fields. They begin to develop personal goals in their own dancing. They visit local dance venues, and learn about the physical and social benefits of dancing.

Social Studies: Exploring the Historical Context of Dance

Motivation: How did the slaves communicate and [express](#) themselves? Ask the students to create a simple clapping conversation with the person sitting next to them. The conversation should be a call and response without using words. (5 minutes) Emphasize that the clapping can be soft or loud, long phrases of claps or short depending on what message is trying to be communicated.

Group Activities: The teacher will then show a “call and response” from *Joy2Learn*, duets section.

The teacher can ask if anyone would like to “show” their chair, duet of claps. The class will listen for sounds. Discussion can follow.

The teacher can demonstrate how *Joy2Learn* works and help the students discover what is on the website program. This may take one or several periods depending on the class size and length of time available in the period.

Individual Activity:

Part 1: [Research Paper](#): (5 pages)

Students will research “Life as a Slave” before 1865. They will include in their understanding of life as slave, how Tap dance originated and became part of many slaves’ lives. They will use *Joy2Learn* as at least one reference for their research. They should answer who, what, where, when and why questions pertaining to their research.

Sample questions to be answered:

1. Who were the slaves?
2. How do you think they felt being a slave? What are some evidences of this?



3. What happened to them in Africa and in America? How did they arrive in America?
4. Where did they live in the old and new country? What were their living conditions like?
5. How were they treated?
6. How did they communicate? How did they have fun? How did they express themselves?
7. How and where did they learn to tap dance? Why did they tap?
8. What kind of music did they listen to during this time in history?
9. How did the music influence tap dance?

ADVANCED PAPER:

What happened to Tap Dance after slavery? How did it evolve?

Part 2: Demonstration

Students will present a short demonstration of tap created from their own experience. They can create their own “steps” or show ones that they learned from Gregory Hines on *Joy2Learn*. They can perform this with tap shoes, soft shoe, or make tap shoes from bottle caps or other materials. They can work with a partner to create a duet showing “call and response” or in a group creating a story line using the slavery time period as a theme.