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Chita Espino-Bravo Ph.D.

D. Nicole English

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Teaching Hispanic Culture, Diversity, and Tolerance through Hispanic Dances and Music: Two Approaches for Flamenco & Caribbean Dances

Chita Espino-Bravo

Professor of Spanish - Fort Hays State University

D. Nicole English

Assistant Professor of Sociology - Fort Hays State University

A Sociology Approach: Dance can be a useful tool for teaching students about culture and community. Through the language of Dance and Music (Caribbean Dance), context is given to social facts, which engages and informs students about such social issues as history, Colonialism, social class, gender, race/ethnicity, and social justice. The added bonus of using Dance as a lens is that it involves active, embodied learning (Dewey, English, Mead), making the material more memorable, meaningful, and relevant to the learner.

A Communicative Approach (Task-based Learning Activity) & Language for Specific Purposes: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a derivative of the Communicative Approach (CA) and Second language Acquisition (SLA) studies. Certain types of communicative learning activities can lead to acquisition of language (Abdel Kazeroni, Aquilino Sanchez, Margaret Robertson, Yiqng Lin). When teaching a Hispanic Dance Session using specific Spanish vocabulary of the dance to address certain dance movements (like Flamenco dance), we engage language learners in acquiring Spanish parts of language related to the flamenco dance. We also immerse learners in the culture of flamenco dance, and its rich cultural context, so they can learn about the social context, gender issues, the different meanings of the dance movements, the metaphors, and by extension they will learn about diversity, tolerance, inclusion, and respect for another culture through dance and music (Language for Specific Purposes: Angela N. Gardner, Howard Gardner, Victoria Escaip).

Keywords: Spanish for Specific Purposes; Flamenco Sessions and Spanish Vocabulary and Culture; Task-Based Learning Activity; Teaching Spanish Through Hispanic Dances and Music; Embodied Learning; Teaching Social Concepts; Culture; Sociology of Dance.

Enfoque teórico de sociología: La danza puede ser una herramienta útil para enseñar a los estudiantes acerca de una cultura y su comunidad. A través del lenguaje de la Danza y la Música (Danza del Caribe), se da contexto a los hechos sociales, lo que involucra e informa a los estudiantes sobre temas sociales como la historia, el colonialismo, la clase social, el género, la raza/etnicidad y la justicia social. La ventaja adicional de utilizar la danza como lente es que implica un aprendizaje activo y corporal (Dewey, English, Mead), lo que hace que el material sea más memorable, significativo y relevante para el alumno.

Enfoque teórico comunicativo (actividad de aprendizaje basada en tareas) y lenguaje para fines específicos: La Enseñanza de Lenguas basada en Tareas (TBLT) es un derivado de los estudios de Enfoque Comunicativo (CA) y Adquisición de una Segunda Lengua (SLA). Ciertos tipos de actividades de aprendizaje comunicativo pueden conducir a la adquisición del lenguaje (Abdel Kazeroni, Aquilino Sánchez, Margaret Robertson, Yiqng Lin). Al enseñar una sesión de danza y bailes hispanos utilizando vocabulario español específico de los bailes para abordar ciertos movimientos de danza (como el baile flamenco), involucramos a los estudiantes de idiomas en la adquisición de partes del lenguaje en español relacionadas con el baile flamenco. También sumergimos a los alumnos en la cultura del baile flamenco y su rico contexto cultural, para que puedan aprender

sobre el contexto social, las cuestiones de género, los diferentes significados de los movimientos de baile, las metáforas y, por extensión, aprenderán sobre la diversidad, la tolerancia, la inclusión y el respeto por otra cultura a través del baile y la música (Lenguaje para Fines Específicos: Angela N. Gardner, Howard Gardner, Victoria Escaip).

Palabras clave: Español para fines específicos; sesiones de flamenco; vocabulario y cultura española; actividades de aprendizaje basado en tareas; enseñanza del español a través de danzas/bailes y música hispanas; aprendizaje corporizado; enseñanza de conceptos sociales, cultura, sociología de la danza.

1. Part I: Using Dance to Teach Spanish Language and Culture

1.1 Hispanic Dance Sessions at FHSU

At Fort Hays State University (FHSU) we have a Spanish Club that is a departmental student club and is part of the Modern Languages Department. Dr. Nicole English (Sociology) and Dr. Espino-Bravo (English & Modern Languages) collaborate in the Hispanic Dance Session that were created 16 years ago at FHSU by Dr. Espino-Bravo, to share dances from the Hispanic world, and to work with diversity awareness, tolerance, and respect for other cultures by learning Hispanic dances, the culture of the dance, and the music. It was and is a way of immersing students and attendees in the culture of the country where the dances originate. Using some Spanish vocabulary to address certain dance movements, we engaged mostly US learners in parts of Spanish language related to the dances (Language for Specific Purposes/Task-Based Learning Approach). We also immersed the learners in the culture of the dance, the country the dance is from, the different music and steps each dance has, what the dances mean, and where they come from, the meaning or metaphors of the different dances and movements, and the music. The Hispanic Dance Sessions were created with 4 goals in mind (Espino-Bravo, 2021):

- To teach about a different culture, country, origin of the dance and music, and influences, in order to show attendees that human expression of dance and music are intimately connected. We all express the same feelings and emotions through different dances and different types of music and can relate to this aspect.
- To teach respect for another culture, another country, and the people from that country by teaching their dances and music.
- To teach diversity and inclusiveness by teaching a dance, and its music that are rare or not mainstream to the people learning about it.
- To teach tolerance for different cultures and different ways of expressing ourselves through dance and music, which, by extension, helps us learn to be more tolerant of diverse ways of living in general. The dance sessions teach about different ways of living life and expressing it through dances and music (p. 24).

Language for Specific Purposes (Field LSP) and Task-Based Learning Activity (TBLA) (Communicative Teaching Approach) were used in a Flamenco session to show how the Spanish Flamenco dance and its music, culture, and context could be used to create a TBLA, a specific language learning class. This activity was created so that attendees would be able to identify

specific Spanish vocabulary and Spanish structures while in the dance session and perform the Flamenco movements learned.

■ 1.2 Task-Based Learning Approach

Kazeroni explains (1995) what a Task-Based Activity is:

As can be seen from the above definitions, “task” can mean anything. It can designate language-learning material developed to be used in the classroom, just as it can *label* whatever a living human being does. Language teaching approaches tend to be language-centred, learner-centred, or language learning-centred (see Hutchinson & Waters 1987). Tasks can be said to be learner-centred or language learning-centred. Task designers having distanced themselves from the tradition of using discrete linguistic forms as units of syllabus construction no longer take the language-centred approach (p. 23).

In the Flamenco dance session we taught, vocabulary about Flamenco is explained in English, but the vocabulary is used in Spanish. Students learn to perform certain dance movements when the specific vocabulary is mentioned in Spanish. The *Pre-task Activity* was to explain the activity in English, and some movements and vocabulary. The *Task-Based Learning Activity* was to learn the new vocabulary in Spanish with the Flamenco movements and steps, the metaphors, and the music. The *Post-Task Activity* was to ask students/attendees if they understood the movements and if they could briefly explain what they learned in the session/or if they had questions or comments about what they learned.

■ 1.3 Communicative Approach

Communicative Language Teaching sees meaningful communication as the goal whereas *Task-Based Learning Approach* takes it a bit further, so students need to communicate in order to achieve or do a meaningful task. Both acknowledge the importance of *real authentic meaningful communication* as a way to learn a language. Specific vocabulary and sentences in Spanish were expressed in the Flamenco session, and students identified these phrases with the correct Flamenco dance movement. Students/attendees not only learned the words, but the movement and music that goes with that word. They learned the meaning of the words and what they needed to communicate with the Flamenco step when they danced. Yiqing Lin (2020) explains the difference between TBLT and CLT:

The difference between TBLT and CLT is that they take different routes to achieve the goal of communicative competence, and frame tasks differently. CLT engages students in the function of language use, whilst TBLT focuses on improve the comprehension-based competence of language use. However, the approaches have many more similarities than differences. Although CLT has fallen from favor, TBLT, exists as a development of the communicative approach, covering shortcomings in both theory and practice, creating a diverse environment for communication and interaction (p. 24).

TBLT is still part of the Communicative Approach, and both create an environment for communication and interaction.

The dance sessions we offer at FHSU are practical classes where attendees learn new dance moves and steps to music they might never have heard before. As an example, I talk about Flamenco, which is hardly known here in the area of Kansas where we live. I am sure my students and other attendees think it is the strangest music to which they have ever danced. Flamenco is an art or genre which embraces different mediums—the guitarist, the singer, the dancer, or

all of them together. Through Flamenco, attendees learn about Spain and the south of Spain (Andalusia), about Arabic, Indian, and Gypsy influences in the music (Bruce, 2018), and about the steps and rhythms related to the steps, and rhythms of some Arabic dances and Indian dances (Bruce, 2018)¹.

Attendees also learn about “palos”, types of Flamenco dances, and music² and how very hard they are to learn. They are learned by listening, by repetition, and the repetition of Flamenco moves, and steps allow them to become more natural to the learners of Flamenco. In my opinion and as a student of Flamenco at *Sara Martín Flamenco School (Online)* (“Escuela Online de Flamenco”), the most challenging aspect of Flamenco is arm position, hand movement, and tapping to a specific rhythm (*palo*), and the coordination of all the different body movements with the tapping. Each move has meaning and expresses an emotion. The entire body dances Flamenco, even your face and facial expressions are part of the Flamenco move you are learning.

To make sense out of Flamenco, we need to teach a bit of the origin of this dance, what it means, why it was danced, and how we can come as close as possible to the Flamenco dancer, “el gitano/la gitana” and the culture of Andalusia. Flamenco is the mix of the folklore of Andalusia and the “gitano” dances and is officially called Flamenco in the 19.th century in Spain. One cannot exist without the other. In the 19.th century, the outcasts, the “gitano” (gypsy) was living marginalized. Gypsies lived outside of society and that was an exotic idea for the Romantics in Europe. This idea was attractive to Europeans and the Romantics of the 19.th century, and the place to visit was the South of Spain. They wanted to experience Flamenco, the “gitanos”, and that exotic culture. The female Flamenco dancer is also very attractive to the Romantics, as she is seductive, and invites to being viewed on stage as an object of pleasure. The “flamenca” has the audience’s eyes on her body. She is a temptress, and her body is the metaphor of many ideas. Her body is used to express all those ideas, like hate, love, sensuality, provocation, sadness, anger, rebellion and challenge, disdain... etc. These metaphors are also explained in the Flamenco session and through metaphors, we try to teach the meaning of certain Flamenco movements so attendees can express those meanings using their bodies. Some of the female Flamenco dancer movements are very sensual and exotic. We need to explain that so attendees can express that when they perform the movements. Malefyt explains about the sexual qualities in Flamenco, and how erotically charged and gendered this form of art can be:

The guitar is often compared to a woman’s body and guitarists are always men, sparking many jokes, and much mild lewdness. Even castanets played in the right and left hands, are distinguished as male or female (right female, left male mine): the “male” castanet is recognized for the ever-so-subtle but evident “protrusion” at its base. These sexual qualities in flamenco (although mentioned only in brief here) add to the strong gender divisions already present in Andalusian society, and make flamenco a charged, but relevant subject in which to explore issues of gender and local/national identity. Flamenco, like many dance forms, is drenched in eroticism (p. 64-65).

It is clear then that Flamenco is erotically charged and that the students learning Flamenco

¹David Bruce Composer (2018) in “The Mystery at the Heart of Flamenco” studies the possible influences in flamenco music. Bruce looks at a huge range of influences that go into making Flamenco music, like the European “common practice” chord progression, the Islamic scales, the music of Gypsies, the music of Berbers, and finally, the guitar itself; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYgTkW4WK80>.

²Flamenco dance should be understood as a popular dance and not as a refined or educated dance. In Spanish, two different words are used to differentiate these two types of dances, “danza” and “baile”. Flamenco dance would be “baile flamenco”. For an interesting study about “danza” and “baile” differences, see José F. Ortega’s study, “De la danza y el baile en tiempos de Cervantes”; DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.18239/invesmusic.2017.02.1546>.

moves, especially the females, need to be able to communicate those erotically charged meanings and metaphors with their body movements.

■ 1.4 Language for Specific Purposes

When we use a specific Hispanic dance to teach specific Spanish vocabulary related to the dance and culture of the dance, we are using Language for Specific Purposes. Hudson and Brown in *Developing Courses in Languages for Specific Purposes* explain that:

Language for specific purposes (LSP) courses are those in which the methodology, the content, the objectives, the materials, the teaching, and the assessment practices all stem from specific, target language uses based on an identified set of specialized needs. Common examples of LSP include courses like Japanese for Business, Spanish for Doctors, Mandarin for Tourism, or English for Air-traffic Controllers. In each of these cases, the content and focus of the language instruction is narrowed to a specific context or even a particular subset of tasks and skills (p. 2).

Hudson and Brown explain that the context and the people involved (like the learners, or the professionals in the field, drive LSP curriculum, unlike general purposes language instruction, which is often driven by theory alone (p. 2). Hudson and Brown provide a great example of how language and culture can fit together within LSP (p. 21). The final chapter in their study describes how LSP presents different challenges and points of view as compared to ESP and how LSP is in many ways more culturally and contextually sensitive than other forms of language instruction. Learners in LSP are typically not experts in the language yet, and therefore need different approaches to be considered in the curriculum development process, especially in terms of balancing linguistic, cultural, and content-area instruction (p. 22-23). LSP can then be used to teach culture through dance and specific language.

2. Explaining How Dance Can Help Learn/Acquire Spanish Vocabulary and Spanish Structures and Culture. Theory Review

Escaip presented very valuable ideas in her Power Point Presentation, “Dance in the Language Class”. For her, to effectively teach language, you need an enriched learning environment which is multisensory, interactive, and challenging (p. 2). Escaip mentions Howard Gardner’s *Multiple Intelligence Theory* as she uses music and dance in her classroom to teach the Spanish language and applies it to her classroom. Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory talks about the following intelligences and what we learn with them (see Figura 1).

Escaip explains that dance integrates all these 8 intelligences, and it is a language-like form of kinesthetic intelligence. Through language we learn vocabulary (steps and gestures), grammar (justifying sequence of moves), and meaning (usually telling a story) (p. 7). It is important to mention that dance is a cultural experience, as through the dance we learn the values, beliefs and traditions recorded in the dance. We learn about the climate, terrain, religion, and politics that influenced the dance, we learn about dance and when it is used, either for festivities or to socialize, or to relax, and celebrate special occasions. Dances also pass knowledge to the next generations, as they tell stories of significant past events (p. 9). We had all these ideas in mind when we prepared our Hispanic Dance Sessions.

When teaching a Hispanic Dance Session, we try to teach basic steps and body movements that go with the music of the dance. Learning about our bodies placed in space in specific positions is a challenge sometimes, but we still do it, and attendees focus on body movements and rhythms,

as well as on the vocabulary and Spanish structures we teach with the dance movements. As H. Gardner (2011) explains in *Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*:

According to the American dancer and choreographer Paul Taylor, a dancer must learn to execute a dance movement precisely in shape and time. The dancer is concerned with placement, stage spacing, the quality of a leap, the softness of a foot—whether a movement goes out to an audience or spirals into itself (p. 236).

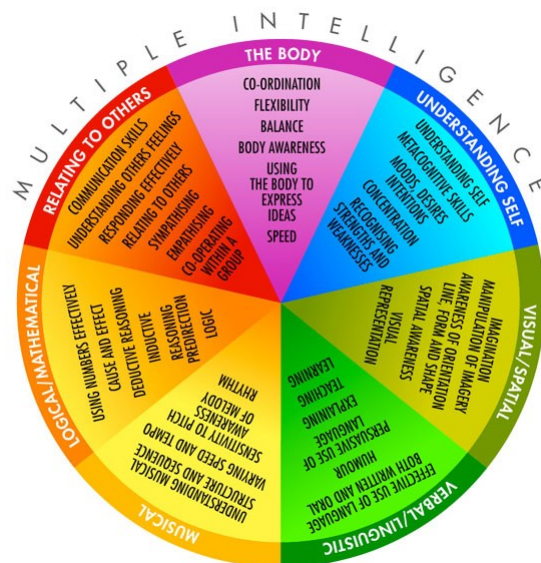


Figura 1. Multiple Intelligence (free image with no copyright. Creator: pixy.org.: <https://pixy.org/src/53/536631.jpg>)

Research that supports our idea of using dance and music to teach specific Spanish vocabulary and metaphors to language learners is the work of Angela Gardner (2016), who makes a great point in “The Case for Integrating Dance in the Language Classroom”. She believes we should integrate dance into language learning courses on a regular basis as it helps language learners to be exposed to culture and the understanding of deeper culture. She explains:

Integrating dance on a regular basis into language learning curriculum, for example, necessitates rich use of the target language to communicate in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Dancing affords language learners the opportunity to delve into deeper cultural meaning and understanding. Additionally, the regular and purposeful integration of dance into a world language curriculum opens the doors of opportunity for language learners to connect their learning to other disciplines, such as art, history, and even mathematics (p. 2).

Angela Gardner explains that dance allows us to pay more attention to the categories that define movement systems within individual cultures, nations, or societies. She explains that for anthropology and its related disciplines (which are folklore, ethnomusicology, ethnology, and ethnography), aspects of culture are revealed in dance practices (p. 2). She also quotes Hanna Dox and explains that dance is linked to culture. Gardner explains that culture is another key

concept of dance, as it refers to the values, norms, beliefs, and rules shared by a group and learned through communication: «The relationship between dance and culture is reciprocal. Culture gives meaning to who dances what, why, how, when, where, and with and for whom, in addition to the dance audience [...] Dancers may reflect and/or influence culture» (p. 3). Gardner continues explaining that if we consider dance an integral and relevant aspect of a culture, we must consider the importance that it has in our language curriculum. The cultural benefits of dance in the classroom can include a deeper understanding of the geography, history, clothing, music, motion, and behaviors related to dance, the country. There are many forms of dance and many components that can illuminate cultural values (p. 3).

Another author Gardner mentions in her study is Lorrie Mack and her book *Dance* (2012). She mentions that Mack’s research is about the customs related to attire, props and the instruments used in different dances. Some of those props symbolize ancient customs (p. 21). The attire and props are specific to each different dance being performed and are an important part of the rituals and customs of the dancers (p. 4). Through the dance clothes and props, attendees of dance sessions learn about the culture of the dance and the specific language related to it.

Gardner mentions the well-known Hanna research (2008) who describes the link between dancing, brain function, and language, stating that certain areas in the brain which control hands and gesture overlap and develop together with the areas that control speech and the mouth. She further explains that the process of creating a dance uses the same components in the brain for creativity, memory, and conceptualization. Dance can engage learners and provides a direct link between physical movement and abstract concepts, and at the same time it promotes creativity (p. 5). Gardner mentions other authors as well who research about dancing and what it does to the brain. She mentions Power (2010) who explains that dance offers the opportunity to create new neural pathways through kinesthetic, rational, musical, and emotional connectivity. These benefits help to prepare the brain for other learning tasks, increasing participant alertness and energy levels (p. 5). Gardner concludes that there are benefits to introducing language through the context of dancing within the language classroom. One such benefit is to foster connections to other disciplines through dancing’s connections, that is, history, music, physical movement, art, and culture. She explains that dancing allows language learners and teachers to employ a variety of vocabulary that includes body parts, locations, words related to historical and folkloric stories, and to music and rhythm (p. 6).

Another researcher Gardner mentions is Bell and his ideas from 1997 which talk about integrating dance in the language class. She explains Bell’s linguistic and inter-curricular connections in dance. There are seven major reasons to integrate dance into the language learning classroom. The first reason is that dance provides engaging ways where students can learn functional control of language, like stress and intonation, or conversational rhythm, body movement, or gesture. The second reason is that dance and gesture combine to provide powerful kinesthetic connections for vocabulary development. The third reason is that dance can be used to unify the students in the classroom. It also helps to lower affective factors in the classroom. The fourth reason is that dance has the power to transform our notions of space in the classroom. The fifth is that dance can expose language learners to the culture which underlies the target language. The sixth reason is that dance allows students to get in touch with those rhythms resources which played part in the acquisition of their first language. They make these resources available for the kinesthetic learning of their second language. The seventh reason is that dance liberates language learners from the stillness and silent present in many language classrooms. They prepare the body and the mind for more cognitive demands of language learning (p. 6-7). All these seven reasons are excellent to consider using dance in the language classroom.

Gardner explains Krashen’s ideas (2015) about first and second language acquisition. For

Krashen and in his own words:

Second language acquisition theory distinguishes subconscious language acquisition from second language learning. Acquisition is hypothesized to be subconscious in the sense that while it is happening we are not usually aware of it; our focus is elsewhere, on the message that is being communicated. The results of acquisition are also subconscious—we cannot describe our acquired knowledge, but, rather, have a “feel” for correctness in the language we have acquired (p. 43).

Krashen (2015) explains what his Din hypothesis is: «The Din is a result of stimulation of the Language Acquisition Device» (p. 43), and it «will not occur after output practice without practice. It will also not occur after pattern drills or grammar exercises» (p. 44). For Krashen, the «Din may tell us when we are providing truly interesting and comprehensible input, and, thus, when we are causing real second language acquisition» (p. 44).

Gardner also explains Krashen’s idea of TPR (Total Physical Response) and says Krashen (2015) suggests expanding the use of movement in the classroom to include other forms beyond TPR. She explains that for Krashen the core idea of TPR is the use of movement to make input comprehensible and engage students in the classroom. This movement does not only have to be “standing up”. It can be other movements like yoga or juggling. While Krashen does not specifically list dance as such an activity, Gardner affirms that dance is an excellent venue for movement and exercise (p. 7). Gardner explains that according to the International Society of Teachers of Dancing (2009), dancing can help reduce stress levels, increase self-esteem and confidence, and build communication skills. Further statements from an article by University of California Berkeley Wellness (2014), indicate that dancing provides physical, social, and psychological benefits and may be good for your mood as well. Dancing has been shown to reduce depression, stress, and anxiety, and it boosts self-esteem, body image, resilience, and a sense of well-being, with the benefits lasting over time (p. 7).

Gardner continues explaining why dance is an important activity to be included in any language classroom. She explains:

Compared to other traditional activities, dance offers the opportunity to interact with peers and the instructor(s) in a contextualized scenario, unlike traditional video or audio listening activities where students are unable to engage by asking questions or participating actively in the dialogue. Dance offers an authentic context in which students can communicate verbally and non-verbally in structured and spontaneous ways. The authenticity of the activity, as well as the support offered by peers and the instructor can help to lower the level of anxiety in the classroom, increasing productivity and uptake of the language (p. 9).

Gardner concludes that if teachers were to effectively integrate dance into their world language curriculum, there are several components that are essential to be successful:

These components include the skills to execute the steps, motions, and patterns associated with the dance, to identify the appropriate types of music, and to know about the history, culture, and origins of the music. Ideally, this would mean that it would be desirable that a world language teacher would have at least a functional working knowledge and skill in the basic or more advanced steps of the dances they intend to integrate into their lessons, as well as knowledge of the music, history, and culture of the dances. However, if a teacher is not inclined to demonstrate dance moves firsthand, multimedia can provide dance demonstrations, or the teacher can invite dance performers as guests to demonstrate dance moves. Pedagogical strategies such as jigsaw cooperative learning can be integrated, placing the learner in the role of discoverer of knowledge about various dance customs and their history, thereby

alleviating the teacher from being the sole purveyor of knowledge and placing the learner in the role of active constructor of knowledge. The integration of dance into the language classroom can serve as a valuable source of comprehensible input in language and cultural learning. The benefits of dance include cognitive, linguistic, and cultural competencies that have been well documented in the research. The integration of dance in the language classroom, if used effectively, can contribute to creating an optimal learning environment that meets the affective and cognitive needs of its learners as well as promote an active and engaging learning approach that provides an authentic experience and lifelong skills that improves the quality of life beyond the classroom walls (p. 13-14).

To conclude the section of theory review on different teaching approaches to teach language using dance, Ildiko Pinter (1999) in “Second Language Development Through the Use of Dance” explains that we can read a person’s body language and it can tell us more than just words. He mentions the relationship between mind and body, and that one of the ways this relationship can be explored is using dance:

Through dance, individuals develop “muscle sense” or kinesthetic perception of bodily movement. They gain a sense of rhythm, as movement is not isolated but is part of a whole. While dancing, students develop a sense of fluency as their bodies become more centred. As students gain this kinesthetic perception, they learn to express their own feelings and they also increase their movement vocabulary. Dance, then, becomes a vehicle for expressing the inner life of the individual. To date, the functions of dance have been examined from several perspectives. Dance has been seen as emotional experience, nonverbal communication, as a means of establishing social unity, as an expression of the collective unconscious of a society, and as a form of movement. In addition to all of these valuable elements, there are further purposes dance can serve (p. 13).

His study explores a holistic approach to language acquisition using dance to help connect the two. Dance then becomes this powerful tool of communication, which needs to be explored and considered as a potential strategy for second language acquisition (p. 14). Pinter also explains that being immersed in an environment, where only that specific language is spoken, is the quickest and most efficient way to learn that language (p. 14). We can then say that the specific language (dance vocabulary and metaphors) we used in the Flamenco session will be learned quickly by immersing the attendees/students in the culture/environment and music of the specific dance.

Pinter also explains that there are many concepts associated with the teaching of foreign languages that are also essential to dance. Some parallels between language teaching and dance are that they share common goals, the most important being effective “performance”, communicating the intended, appropriate message (p. 15). Pinter explains that dancer and language learners need to be able to decide what they want to communicate, how they want to communicate that message, and they need to be able to perform with competence (p. 15-16). Pinter further explains that when we use dance as a teaching strategy for language learning, dialogue should be incorporated simultaneously and/or subsequently during most part of the movement activity. Students will learn grammar, language functions, culture, pronunciation and intonation, language “coping” strategies like paraphrasing, role playing, appreciation of underlying meaning, appreciation of nonverbal communication, interpretation of subtext (like reading between the lines), observation skills, self-expression, empathy, and so on (p. 16). An important point Pinter makes is when he talks about the teaching of culture. He divides the teaching of culture into two categories called copying strategies and knowledge:

Knowledge about a specific culture can be learned through various dance activities. Skills that can be useful in cross-cultural interactions can also be developed. The best thing that

can be done for language learners is to help them learn about culture on their own. Perhaps the most difficult task a person faces when living in a foreign culture is the interpretation of experiences. The more skilled the language learners become, the more adept they will be at acquiring cultural knowledge. Hence, it is important to incorporate activities that involve cultural knowledge for the second language learner. They become more aware of their environment, and they develop coping strategies that make them more adaptable to their living conditions. One way this can be done is to split the class into pairs or small groups to create short, realistic interactions (p. 17).

Pinter believes that dance gives students a great opportunity for self-expression. Even though there might be issues with self-expression, gradually, students will become less apprehensive about performance and the activities become easier to deal with (p. 19). The less anxious individuals are, the better they can express themselves which then makes the actual language learning process much easier. We can then say that dance is an important way to establish and build a good sense of self-confidence and self-esteem for the second language student (p. 20).

3. Metaphors in Flamenco to Understand Flamenco Dance Movements

Using metaphors to make the dance understandable and performable for learners of Flamenco dance is very important as attendees may not understand the music, the meaning of the movements nor what they need to express with the movement. Spanish metaphors of the dance we used in the Flamenco session were: “el torero, torear y pases de torero” (bullfighters and bullfighting) which are present in some Flamenco moves, or “que viene el toro, la fiesta, las palmas y el jaleo” (word for noise making in Flamenco, and a party). In sum, we are teaching Spanish culture through the Flamenco dance steps and movements. Students immerse themselves in Spanish culture through the vocabulary in Spanish, the dance movements, and the music. Sometimes, we needed to use American metaphors to explain Spanish or Hispanic metaphors of the dance movements to younger generations from the US, as they are not familiar with Spanish/Andalusian culture nor with metaphors and meanings dance movements had during the 19.th century (Romantic period). For example, our student Sofi had never seen a bullfighter nor any bullfighting. The closest event she could relate to was with a Rodeo event in Kansas, US.

3.1 Material for presentation: Spanish Vocabulary, Structures, and Metaphors to Explain Specific Steps and Movements of Flamenco

In our Flamenco dance session, we used a Task-Based Learning Activity (TBLA) to teach specific Flamenco vocabulary that students/attendees needed to identify with the steps and movements and repeat once they learned them. The steps were taught in English with the vocabulary in Spanish, and then the movements were performed with music/rhythm and the vocabulary in Spanish. The pre-task consisted of explaining what we would do in the Flamenco session. The task was to learn the movements and steps using Spanish vocabulary and metaphors to explain the meaning, and the post-task was a short interview done to three attendees. One was done to Maureen on Zoom at the end of the session, and the other two were done the following week. We asked the attendees what they had learned, and each of them mentioned different aspects of the dance and language. For instance, Sofi mentioned she remembered the “vuelta quebrada” in Spanish and the exact move, and what the movement meant. She was able to describe the movement in English and perform it (classroom examples video link in Works Cited).

■ 3.2 Vocabulary Taught in the Flamenco Dance Session

Metaphors of Flamenco movements we taught were: “la verónica” (la verónica entera, la media verónica), and “toreo”, bullfighting movements which were taught as part of the culture of Flamenco, the steps, and movements. For example: “pasar el capote, que viene el toro”, for “pasar la bandeja como azafata”. We explained that passing a tray is similar to the movements of “pasar el capote”, but not quite the same. Spanish culture from Andalusia was explained, bullfighting movements were explained and put in the context of Andalusian culture and bullfighting, and then the Flamenco steps and movements were explained. We used the metaphor of “el toreo, el torero, y el capote, la media verónica” to explain specific movements in Flamenco. We then tried to perform the movements while the instructor said the expressions in Spanish. The movement was a backward turn with the movement of “pasar el capote” (“vuelta por atrás (con tacón), con media verónica en toreo”). We used bullfighting moves from the “torero” to explain Flamenco moves and Spanish vocabulary. Bullfighting movements are part of Flamenco and part of Andalusian culture (South of Spain), and you can find many connections to “toreo y pases del toreo” in Flamenco steps and movements. Both male and female Flamenco dancers perform those steps. In the video below, you can find an example of what a “media verónica” looks like in bullfighting, and you can use a video to show the students in the dance sessions, so they have an idea of what is meant.

- Example of “media verónica”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PF3J_x0raY (ejemplo de media verónica). “Manos y capote hasta la cadera en 90 grados” (Hands and cape up to the hips at 90 degrees).
- Example of video from the dance session where Dr. Espino-Bravo explains what the “verónica” and “media verónica” are (Classroom examples link in Works Cited <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95TRanQ658>).

Another Flamenco movement and steps which were explained was a specific forward turn with half your body bend (“vuelta quebrada por delante”). The move was explained with Spanish vocabulary, and to explain what we needed to perform, we used metaphors that are currently used in some Flamenco dance sessions, like: “La niña del exorcista”... a turn, arms up and head in the same position for two counts of three. Una vuelta quebrada con la cabeza de la “la niña del exorcista”. Try to hold your head in the same position while your body is turning until you must turn your head. In English it is called “spotting”, so you do not get dizzy when you do dance turns. Using a metaphor for this move helps learners memorize the move and steps better.

- Example of video from the dance session: “Vuelta quebrada por detrás” (Classroom examples link in Works Cited: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95TRanQ658>).

We explained basic body positions for Flamenco dance as well, and a very important one is the arm movements and the *armed elbows*. To explain these arm movements, Spanish vocabulary was used and metaphors that represented the movements the arms we were doing. Example: “La pelota” (touching the inside of a big ball from the inside of the ball), “el arrebató con un remate simple” (simple footwork with a fist of anger/passion), “el pomo de la puerta” (“floreo”, beautiful hands and finger movements). Metaphors like the flower and the flower stem were used to explain what the hands, fingers and arms did in the “floreo flamenco”.

3.3 Language for Specific Purposes: Teaching a Flamenco Session with Spanish Vocabulary Related to Flamenco (Teaching Spanish Culture)

LSP was also used, as we were using specific Spanish language (the language used in a Flamenco dance session) to learn about Andalusian culture, the South of Spain, and by extension Spanish culture. Students were able to repeat the structures and words learned, and perform the steps during and after the session (check the *post-task activity* where Maureen (classroom examples link in Works Cited), Sofi and Nicole use specific Flamenco language they learned during the Flamenco session (classroom examples link in Works Cited)). The Language for Specific Purposes Approach allows us to teach about a different culture, country, origin and history of the dance and music, and influences, to show attendees that human expression of dance and music are intimately connected. We all express the same feelings and emotions through different dances and different types of music and can relate to this aspect. Specific vocabulary related to Flamenco and the Flamenco dance we are learning in the session is part of the culture of Andalusia, the south of Spain. Using LSP was very useful as students/attendees learned specific Spanish vocabulary and Spanish structures related to Flamenco dance and to the Andalusian culture. They learn about the origin of the dance (Gypsies (“cultura gitana”), India, Arabic influence in Spain, Spanish folkloric dances), the influences from other countries and music, the different hypotheses where Flamenco originated (Bruce, 2018)³, the official start of Flamenco as a business in the 19.th century with the “Cafés Cantantes” and Impresarios, Gypsy culture and some history related to Flamenco and “gitanos”.

3.4 Students/Attendees Learn About the Structure of Flamenco Dance

Examples of Structure of Flamenco (“Estructura del Flamenco”) we learned in the Flamenco session were: “llamadas, *remates*, salidas, cierres, falsetas, subidas (acelerar la velocidad)”. Each “palo” has musical and rhythmical structures⁴. This allows us to identify the “palo”, the rhythm, and the mood of the Flamenco dance. Specific vocabulary for Flamenco movements used in the dance sessions were:

- “Marcajes y braceo (piernas y brazos)”. Arm and hand movements.
- “Floreo (de flores)... manos y brazos como un tallo y su flor”. Moving the hands like flowers.
- “Brazos y codos armados”. Armed elbows and arms.
- “Las palmas (para jaleos y ritmo). Palmas abiertas (sonoras) o palmas cerradas (sordas)”. Making noise to cheer up the dancer(s) and musicians, clapping to the rhythm of the “palo”.
- “Remate/escobilla: La escobilla es el apogeo del baile flamenco. Es el momento en el que el bailar o bailaora ejecuta una composición rítmica completa con un zapateado”. Footwork. It is the moment in which the dancer executes a complete rhythmic composition with a “zapateado”.
- “Una vuelta/un giro hacia atrás con brazos estilo verónica (media verónica/entera). Brazos y cabeza... ¡Que viene el toro!” (The bull is coming!) Turns with a bullfighting movement incorporated in it (media verónica).

³Check footnote 1 (Bruce, 2018).

⁴“Palo” is a variety of Flamenco singing, but it is not only a rhythm and a beat, as it can also imply a type of melody, performed in a specific way. For example, the “bulerías por soleá” and the “alegrías” share the same beat, but their melodies unfold in different ways. The “palo flamenco” defines the rhythm, structure, and time signature of the music, whether it is for singing, playing, or dancing.

- “Una vuelta quebrada o con quiebro”. (A turn with the side bend).

4. Conclusion

LSP and TBL Approaches can be used both to teach specific Spanish language, specific vocabulary, metaphors, and culture about a Hispanic dance through dance and music. We have shown that attendees/students were able to perform some movements we taught in the Flamenco session, even when they were named in Spanish. We have shown attendees would remember the meaning of the movements learned, and the different metaphors they referred to. Attendees were also able to remember some specific Spanish vocabulary used in the session that was repeated during the dancing. In the post-task activity, attendees explained what they had learned, and each of them learned something different, a different aspect about Flamenco dance and Spanish culture. All the different learnings were valuable and appreciated by each attendee/student. One last important aspect is that attendees were able to compare their own culture and knowledge of it to the new culture they were learning about. This will help them be more tolerant of difference, of different cultures, and appreciate diversity in all its different forms.

5. Part II: Using Dance to Teach Social and Cultural Concepts

Dance is a very useful tool for teaching social concepts, culture, and community. Dance can be used as a focus or lens to examine social life and give context to documented “social facts” when educating students, while also engaging students with embodied learning. Also, the embodied quality of dance makes the information more grounded, more relevant, and more meaningful to students. As the daughter of a dance and language teacher, and raised bilingual, using dance as a tool for teaching became second nature for me. Having studied psycholinguistics and the history of language, the connections of language, music and dance became even more apparent. The more obvious advantage of using dance as a tool to learn can be seen in teaching language, particularly vocabulary and relations, such as directions (right, left, above, below, etc.), body parts (head, hand, chest, feet, etc.), spatial references (corners, front, back, forward, backwards, sidewise, etc.), and clothing (skirt, blouse, shirt, shoes, boots, hats, etc.). Specific examples of songs or lyrics can also be used to make language more memorable.

Aside from this obvious advantage for teaching language, dance is useful for teaching culture and for approaching difficult or contentious social concepts. By giving context to the dances themselves, dance gives students insights into the culture and history of its people. Another advantage of using dance as a focal point or lens to teach language, culture, and social concepts lies in the very fact that it is an embodied cultural practice. When learning is connected to the body, it becomes more meaningful and memorable, and thus, can have more impact upon students (Dewey 1938, 1997; English 2015, 2018; Johnson 1990; Hanna 1979, 1987, 2015; Mead 1934, 1967). This aspect of dance, as embodied learning, can be particularly useful for teaching different cultural concepts and diversity, and/or when teaching difficult or contentious social concepts. Some of the cultural concepts that can be taught would include topics such as: cultural customs, language, attire, religion, food, festivals, celebrations, holidays, and of course, language. Some of the social concepts that could be taught through dance could also include Colonialism, slavery, social justice, social class, social positioning, inequalities, ethnic/race relations, gender roles, and gender relations.

■ 5.1 Why Does Embodied Learning Work? Why is it Effective?

As biological beings, we experience the world through our embodied, physical existence. We are grounded to the earth through our physical bodies. As a result, our observations of the world are seen in relationship to the human body (Johnson 1990). You can easily see this in our everyday language. We have many expressions that use the body as a metaphor for making sense of the world. For example, “head of the class” or “face up” to difficult task. We often told to “lend me your ears” or to “keep an eye” on something. We also “give someone a hand” or beware of the “long arm of the Law” in our behavior. We say that an idea has “legs” or that person may have to do some fancy “footwork” to deal with a problem. Even our organs are used in these metaphors, such as going to the “heart” of the matter, or not having the “stomach” to do a particular task. Thus, the more we can connect or pin concepts to the physical body, the more memorable and understandable the concepts will be to students.

According to Hanna (1979, 1987, 2015), dance is a multifaceted practice. It is simultaneously physical behavior, cultural behavior, social behavior, psychological behavior, economic behavior, political behavior, and communicative behavior. It is a very concentrated and complicated medium for sharing information, not only at the cognitive level, but also at a pre-cognitive level, below the level of awareness. For this reason, dance can be very enlightening in an array of different ways, depending on one’s focus in analysis.

Dance research has been greatly influenced by the Social Sciences, particularly by Anthropology and Sociology, and within those disciplines, the sub-specialties of ethnomusicology and sociolinguistics. Dance can be studied as a form of communication (a proto language) as well as to transmit cultural information. Because of these connections, we can easily see how dance can be used to contextualize social and cultural concepts. It can function both as physical connective tissue (embodied learning) and as a medium of communication (a kinetic language).

■ 5.2 Using Dance in a Classroom Setting to Teach Social Concepts: Examples

Giving real-world examples from the classroom may help in visualizing how dance can be used as a cultural practice to teach cultural and social concepts. For my example, I will use the teaching of Cuban (or Caribbean) *Rumba* dance, as a folkloric form. This is not the Europeanized Rhumba taught in Ballroom Dance. Instead, *Rumba* is rather a complex of Hispanic music and dance that originated in Cuba and spread throughout Latin America, with each sub-culture making it their own, creating many local variations (Daniel 1995, 2011; Manuel 2006, 2016). What follows are examples of sample texts (or scripts) that have been used in class to teach Caribbean dance. In the context of teaching the *Rumba* complex of Caribbean dance, one might ask the following: «You may wonder why *Rumba*, a form of Hispanic dance and music, are so prominent in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and throughout the Caribbean, and into the rest of Latin America». In response to this query, one can explain that Caribbean music and dances, particularly those encompassed within the *Rumba* complex, are comprised of three influences: the indigenous, the African (related to the slave trade), and the European (through Colonialism) (Daniel 1995, 2011; Manuel 2006, 2016). This opens an opportunity to discuss issues, such as slavery and Colonialism, in an approachable and non-contentious manner, which can inform students about how these social institutions have shaped culture and society, and with far-reaching consequences. For example, one can point out the differences between Anglo and American forms of slavery, which were much more draconian, compared to Spanish and French forms of slavery, which were relatively more liberal. There were certain cultural and religious reasons shaping the different worldviews, and the place of slavery within that world. This can create an opportunity for a rather nuanced discussion of these issues in a classroom but are beyond the scope of this paper and these examples presented here.

For the purposes of these examples in this dance class, I point out that the Spanish intermarried with the indigenous people in order to stabilize treaties and secure landholdings. Also, the path from slave to freedom was more liberal and attainable. As a result, there was more intermingling of different peoples, different cultures, and different (so-called) races. The Spanish created an elaborate social construction of race, the famous book of *Sistema de castas* (Eakin 2007; Menchaca 2002, 2022), which created an array of names for various combinations of races and established a hierarchy for purposes of inheritance. Although it was still Colonialism, with European Spaniards at the top of the hierarchy, and slaves at the bottom, the slaves did have certain rights. They could not be killed without reason, they could own private property, earn their own money (aside from their slave duties), they could marry, and have families. When sold, families were kept intact. Slaves could also practice cultural customs, speak their own language, play their own music, dance, observe certain religious practices and festivals (under the guise of Catholicism), become educated, and had certain freedom of movement from one place to another. Even this limited amount of freedom allowed those of Caribbean heritage to carve out their own cultural identities (Royce 1982; Sloat 2005).

All of this was in great contrast to Anglo and American slavery, where slaves had no rights, no “families”, were not allowed to speak their native languages, or play their own music. In fact, under Anglo and American slavery, their music was forbidden, and the drum was outlawed, because of the fear that the drum could be used as communication between enslaved groups, and thus used to instigate a revolution among the slaves. The Spanish encouraged cultural practices and intermarriage between mixed-race peoples, resulting in the blending of cultures and much freedom of movement between ports. Thus, the music and dance first developed in Cuba and Puerto Rico soon spread throughout Latin America. Below are some of the sample comments made in dance class to reflect these cultural developments (Daniel 1995, 2011; Manuel 2006, 2016):

- “The music is a combination of indigenous, African, and European influences”.
- “Anglo and American forms of slavery were much more draconian, than Spanish and French forms of slavery, the former prohibited cultural practices, religion, music, song, dance, and especially the drum”.
- “The Spanish encouraged cultural practices and intermarried with indigenous and mixed-race peoples, creating the *sistema de castas* (caste system)”.
- “Thus, there was a blending of cultures, music, dance, religious beliefs, festivals, which was supported by the Catholic Church, to indoctrinate their flock”.
- “Because of so much interaction and travel, the music and dance spread from Cuba and Puerto Rico throughout Latin America”.

After the dance class was over, we could discuss what was learned in the session, culturally, linguistically, historically, and socially, besides the dance and music. The sample follow-up questions about what was learned might include the following:

- “What did we learn today about the popularity of Hispanic music and dance in the Caribbean and in Latin America?”
- “What did we learn about Colonialism and Slavery, and its influence on Latin American music and dance?”

Leaving the questions open-ended would allow for students to put forth what stood out to them and what was memorable. It also created a non-threatening space to discuss these very sensitive topics in a non-contentious way. Discussing Colonialism and slavery (and their consequences) is often problematic in today's political climate. However, discussing them in the context of cultural practices, such as music and dance, makes these contentious topics much more approachable, more neutral, without political positioning. Because it is tied to embodied learning, it can also make the material more memorable for students.

6. Conclusion

It is noteworthy that these dance classes were taught in a hybrid manner, both live in the dance studio and simultaneously via Zoom. We plan to continue to keep Zoom in the mix because of the flexibility it gives us in teaching, the option to record as needed, to expand community outreach, and the opportunity to reach students beyond campus, including online students. Additionally, the dance classes have given us the opportunity to teach related material, including historical context, language, culture, and social issues. By focusing on dance and music, a variety of cultural and social issues can be presented and examined in non-confrontational ways, and anchored in a physical activity that the students enjoy. This makes the learning more memorable, meaningful, and approachable. Although we are, as professors, from different disciplines we share a love for Hispanic music and dance and are able to make connections across disciplines for students. Whether teaching language, cultural concepts, or social issues, dance is a useful practice and tool for teaching.

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